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The Dominican Republic in the twentieth century : notes on mobility and stratification

Sketches some major social developments in 20th-c. Dominican Republic, concentrating on the turn of the last century, the early decades of the 20th c., the Trujillo period, and the post-Trujillo era. Author pays special attention the the question of 'color', stratification, and identity and the relation between the country and Haiti. He concludes that the Dominican Republic has experienced many great changes, making society more complex and more stratified.

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THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: NOTES ON MOBILITY AND STRATIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

Every society stresses its individuality and sees itself as exceptional.¹ When foreigners are surprised to find out that a particular country does not fit into a category they had assumed it belonged to, then it may perhaps claim to be especially exceptional.

The Dominican Republic, for one, was the only agricultural society in the Caribbean where a dominant modern sugar plantation economy developed at a time when slavery had long been abolished. And, among the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic was the only one not involved, at the end of the nineteenth century, in the Spanish-American War which was to change so drastically the course of political events in Cuba and Puerto Rico, Spanish colonies till then. Santo Domingo had gained its independence from Spain several decades earlier. In the many conferences which in 1998 commemorated the conflict and analyzed its consequences, the Dominican Republic was included *pour besoin de la cause*: the year 1898 was not a spectacular watershed in its political history as it was for its sister islands.

Yet, come to think of it, the year 1898 is of some – be it minor – symbolic significance after all, because it was then that President-dictator Ulises Heureaux made a last – and unsuccessful – attempt to convince a group of European financiers to extend him a large loan with which to cancel the debts his government owed to the San Domingo Improvement Company in the United States. In this way, “Lilís” hoped to revert to the situation of European financial dominance that had prevailed until only a few years before that.

1. This is the slightly modified text of a paper delivered at the conference “One Hundred Years of Transformation: The Caribbean and the United States 1898-1998,” City University of New York, October 13-15, 1998. I am indebted to my most constructive critic Ligia Espinal Hoetink, but have to remain solely responsible for this text.

But the sale – in 1893 – of the European financial claims to the North American company had taken place precisely because by then the recently created modern sugar industry in the country – linked as it was to North American financial and consumer markets and to North American shipping lines – had become much more important than the older tobacco and other agricultural interests which had always been – and were to remain – associated with European, especially German, firms.

This ascent of sugar over tobacco had also meant a shift of the national economic center from the Cibao Valley with its small and medium-sized locally owned tobacco farms² to the South with its large sugar plantations and *centrales* (most of them foreign-owned until the 1950s), where much of the local rural population was to become landless and, together with foreign migrant labor, part of sugar's wage-earners. To be sure, in both the tobacco and sugar sectors, the most powerful clients (who often were moneylenders as well) were foreign importers, and we should beware of a tempting idealization of "tobacco" over "sugar." Yet a case can be made for the claim that tobacco production allowed for a somewhat more evenly-spread spin-off and a larger chain of interdependence in the national economy itself, than was the case with sugar.

The increasing weight of sugar in the national economy had begun to make itself felt in the 1870s and had led to a hegemonic position within a few decades. After thus having dominated economically for more than a century, modern sugar production began to suffer a decline in the 1980s, at a time when manufacturing (in or outside of *zonas francas*) and the service industry (especially international tourism) had begun to grow robustly, in the process increasing somewhat the share of non-U.S. capital and markets in the economy and, internally, increasing the share of female non-domestic labor.

These long-term economic changes – from tobacco to sugar cultivation first, and then from primary to secondary and tertiary activities – had been accompanied and, to a point, reinforced by a notable demographic growth over the last hundred years. With close to 500,000 inhabitants at the end of the nineteenth century (Hoetink 1982:19), the country counted over 890,000 in 1920 (Gobierno Militar 1920), one and a half million in the mid-1930s, three million in 1960 (Moya Pons 1977:516), and is said to be between seven and nine million today.

With the agricultural sector unable to absorb this increase to any appreciable extent, a rural exodus was triggered leading to a dramatic growth of the larger cities, as soon as a nation-wide network of roads had been put in place. It also led to a massive migration to the United States, as soon as the political constraints on foreign travel imposed by Trujillo's regime had been abolished.

While in 1930 the rural population was still reckoned to be 84 percent of the total population, and in 1960 60 percent (Moya Pons 1977:517), today more than half of the population lives in urban areas, and about a quarter of the national

2. Of the more recent literature on the Cibao peasantry, see San Miguel 1977 and Baud 1995. It should be pointed out that in spite of the economic shift from the Cibao to the South, the majority of the country's presidents till today have their origins in the Cibao Valley.

population lives in the capital city alone. Small wonder that the service sector (in its widest, heterogeneous meaning) as well as all types of artisanal and (micro-)industrial activities also grew dramatically, especially and disproportionately in the capital (Moya Pons 1992:349).

Once the major urban centers had thus become volatile concentrations of the poor, it was in the government's political interest to keep local food available at affordable prices. As happens elsewhere in such circumstances, this policy led to increasingly unfavorable terms of trade for the agrarian sector (Moya Pons 1992:406, tab.18), hence to further impoverishment of the peasantry and small farmers, and thus to increased migration away from the rural areas.

SOME CHANGES IN SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AROUND THE TURN OF THE LAST CENTURY

As I have suggested elsewhere (Hoetink 1982:176ff), the political stability and economic changes during the Heureaux regime (1882-84 and 1886-99) fostered the formation of a national bourgeoisie. National, because the improved infrastructure made for a closer linkage between the various regional elites, and bourgeoisie because it was the result of a steady amalgamation of members of "respectable" families, often landholders who were profiting from the increasing value of their properties, and the (children of) recent immigrants – from Spain, Italy, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Ottoman Empire (Inoa 1991:35-58) – who had prospered as retail merchants, as importers or exporters, as technicians or professionals, or as sugar growers. Due to the long duration of Heureaux's regime, a number of his protégés, who – like himself – had their origins in the lower strata of society, had not only become prosperous but were able to give their children a good education, often abroad. This made it easier for some of them to also become part of the emerging national elite. In this way structural mobility, produced by the creation of new positions ultimately due to changes in the economic system, was joined by politico-social mobility, resulting from the direct effects of political favoritism.

Both types of mobility also affected, of course, the middle and lower rungs of the social ladders (and not always in upward direction!). Telegraphers, electricians, supervisors in the *centrales*, bookkeepers and other staff in the new enterprises and in the expanding service sector – from schools to offices – all strengthened the middle ranges of society of which, again, also foreign migrants were to form a part. In the lower sector a rural proletariat, mostly in the sugar area, was formed, which only partly originated from that area itself: it was geographical mobility which soon was to deliver most of the sugar labor force. Peasants from elsewhere in the country, not willing to give up their *conuco* but enticed by cash wage, came at first only during the *zafra*. Other seasonal laborers soon came from farther away: the first Haitians arrived in these early years, but larger numbers came from the desperately poor British Leeward Islands, who often ended

up becoming permanent residents. Among other cultural contributions, these latter contributed a Protestant note to the Dominican religious chorus and later, a notable number of them profited from considerable upward mobility.³ But the Dominican lower strata were not only drawn to the sugar fields: there were also opportunities both in the army and navy, which under Heureaux underwent some professionalization, and in the new commercial and industrial firms which were set up in those days.

Sugar and stability, then, made the social stratification more complex; its middle sectors got broader and the number of its rungs increased; at the higher and lower end of the ladder new rungs appeared (Hoetink 1985:170); not only the distance between the highest and the lowest classes grew in the process, but also the inequality between them – at first not necessarily by the poor getting poorer, but rather by the better-off getting richer. Both extremes, moreover, grew more numerous even more quickly than the population at large.

In the larger cities (of which Santiago in the Cibao Valley now had to cede its primacy to the capital in the South), new residential areas outside the old city limits were built for the higher strata, resulting in a greater geographical separation between the classes which until then had lived closer together in a smaller space. The lines of social demarcation grew more incisive, with the new bourgeoisie organizing its own social clubs, which in the next few decades laid a greater claim to exclusivity than the clubs of Spanish and other immigrants who had either arrived very recently, or, having arrived around the turn of the century, had not “made it” to the bourgeoisie a few decades later. All of these organizations were, however, at a “safe” social distance from the equally recent clubs of urban artisans or recent British Caribbean immigrants.

STABILITY AND INSTABILITY: THEIR IMPACT ON STRATIFICATION UNTIL CA. 1930

I have given some special attention, however impressionistic, to the social situation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century because the general direction of the changes it underwent and the rough contours of its social stratification at the end of those years remained recognizable during much of the twentieth century – as long, that is, as there was no fundamental change in the country’s underlying economic structure. From this starting point and against this backdrop I shall try to indicate some of the changes that did take place subsequently.

It is a truism and not, I believe, a partisan political statement, that (all else being equal) improvements in the material infrastructure of a society, and economic expansion generally, profit more from (or at least coincide more often

3. On Haitian migrant workers there is an excellent unpublished manuscript by Orlando Inoa entitled *Braceros haitianos en ingenios azucareros dominicanos*; on labor immigration generally, see del Castillo 1978, Bryan 1979, and Hoetink 1988. On Protestant immigration, see Lockward 1976.

with) a period of political stability than from serious and recurrent social upheavals, no matter how "inevitable" or "just" these latter may be deemed to be.

Such stable periods in the present century I reckon to be a few years of "Mon" Cáceres's government (1908-10), the period of the U.S. military occupation (1916-24), the better part of the Vázquez government (1924-30) and of the Trujillo regime, especially its long middle years (ca. 1935-55), and the long period, after the convulsions of the civil war and the foreign intervention (1965) had quietened down or been repressed, from the early 1970s till the present day, when, in a new democracy, successive parties and presidents were given a reasonably fair chance to govern, with Joaquín Balaguer being, in several respects, the more durable of the latter.

All in all, this amounts to some two thirds of the twentieth century being classified here as stable, half of it spread over the first half century, and the other half mostly concentrated without interruption in the last three decades. These stable periods brought infrastructural improvements, from roads and railroads to sewage systems, from ports and airports to schools and universities, from cultural institutions and parks to a central bank and other financial institutions and innovations, and from new industries to extensive social housing projects, as well as sprawling middle-class suburbs. And when an economic boom made itself felt in some of these stable years (the sugar boom of 1918-20; the War years and part of the 1970s – both with a sugar boom again – and the 1990s), the rhythm of expansion accelerated, just as a serious crisis like that of the 1920s and early 1930s led to a standstill or to contractions, and just as the depression in the late 1970s and early 1980s, triggered by excessive borrowing and inflation, reduced the – already low – buying power of the minimum wage⁴ and led fixed-income middle groups all over Latin America to desperation.

It should be clear, then, that these periods of stability were far from being fortunate in every way. The different economic policies in those periods were not always wise; they were certainly not free of corruption, and some of the various governments were rigid, cruel, and brutal.

Nor do I wish to deny that the years in between, of political chaos or upheaval or even civil war, were perhaps to some extent a "natural" reaction to such stable but harsh regimes, which, once gone, were sometimes followed by an explosive euphoria, and by a perhaps naive wish and hope for immediate radical change; there were also, of course, the risky ambitions of an avenging successor class: those who, armed with the appropriate ideology and sometimes with real arms as well, would want themselves to fill the vacancies left by the powers that were.

Unfortunately, the obverse was true as well. As Luis F. Mejía (1944:77) wrote of the civil wars in the first decades of the twentieth century:

4. Gladys A. Rodríguez, *Pobres e indigentes hasta cuándo?: La pobreza en América Latina y el Caribe parece encontrar una solución en las políticas macroeconómicas*, *Listín Digital*, 22 julio 1998.

Armed revolution, audacious coups, civil war, would bring about, as in effect occurred, a complete disorganization, a regression, the emergence of new military *caudillos*, of new killers, the involuntary increase of the debt [...], and finally, chaos and foreign intervention.⁵

These periods of civil wars and revolutions often witnessed an exceptional politico-social vertical mobility. The new government of the day fired its opponents and appointed its friends in all ranks and positions of the civil and military sector. Of course, these changes also occurred in more stable periods whenever one party succeeded another in power. The exceptionality of the unstable mobility lay, then, not in the number of mutations involved, but in their rapid succession.

Of special interest in this respect were the regional (military) *caudillos* whose power – though temporarily suppressed during the U.S. military occupation – persisted into the early 1930s, when it was crushed by Rafael Trujillo. These rural *caudillos* and their peasant soldiers had decided the outcome of numerous political conflicts. In times of peace they were traditionally kept content with *pensiones* or *asignaciones*; after a decisive victory they were granted official ranks and emoluments. It was a way of life and a profession that dated back to the early years of the Republic and that fitted well into the rural hierarchies and culture. Efforts by earlier presidents, like Cáceres, to stamp it out were doomed to fail (Moya Pons 1977:450, 454), as long as the state was not able (due only in part to defective means of communication) to effectively ensure its monopoly over the military and the police, a monopoly which, together with that over tax collection is, in the Weberian tradition, seen as characteristic of the modern nation-state.

After the armed forces were organized nationally and effectively, a process set in motion under the U.S. occupation and continued and expanded under Vázquez first and then by Trujillo, their rank and file, as well as part of the officer corps (especially that of the army), kept being recruited from the rural, often modest, classes. In this way the military career remained a notable channel for upward mobility, as it had been in the past.

As for careers in the civil service, job opportunities remained scarce, certainly during the first decades of the century. With a large part of the population illiterate, the clerical positions in the only slowly expanding government bureaucracy were occupied by those few with the requisite schooling (and preferably with good penmanship).

But some innovations did occur. During the U.S. occupation, the military authorities appointed a number of well-educated Dominicans in leading administrative positions. One of them, who directed the Department of Labor, claims to have been instrumental in bringing about a drastic change. Until then, for educated women, teaching had been one of the few jobs permitted outside their home. When in these years the first commercial institute with courses in type-

5. All translations from the Spanish are mine.

writing and shorthand was established, its director was persuaded by our civil servant to open his school for women with the promise that the government would welcome them. The first female alumni – seventy-eight of them – easily found a job, several of them indeed in government (de Leon 1972:57ff.).

SOME SOCIAL CHANGES DURING THE TRUJILLO PERIOD

In the following decades, with improving levels of education in the entire national territory, and with a newly housed and equipped national university, staffed by qualified Dominicans and several Spanish intellectuals who had fled from Franco's post-civil-war Spain, women not only began to dominate the lower rungs of clerical work, but several of them also came to occupy high administrative and political positions. They further started to pursue careers in medicine and in other professions at a time and in numbers which did not lag behind the rest of Latin America, and were well ahead, I believe, of many countries in Europe and North America.

During the Trujillo regime, the factual distinction between the growing public and private sectors was blurred, in the sense that *el Jefe* not only had a final say in appointments and dismissals in the government apparatus, but also in the many industries and other enterprises under his private control. In this way, the careers of a large portion of the nation's total work force depended on him personally.

Of the large number of industries and other firms established in the Trujillo period, not all were the dictator's legal property. His central economic aim was to further the country's industrialization. To this end he invited foreigners to start, or invest in, new industries, and he similarly stimulated enterprising Dominicans, at times providing part of their capital.

When his regime ended, most of these industrialists – who were the legal owners of their firms – escaped confiscation. As Moya Pons (1992:360-61) has made clear, they came to embody the hard core of the post-Trujillo business elite which, soon to be organized in the Asociación de Industrias de la República Dominicana, was to strongly influence economic policy in the coming decades and which also, directly or indirectly, contributed to the *zona franca*-industrialization, to the growth of non-traditional agriculture, and to the successful new tourist industry, all of which (together with the monetary transfers of the *dominicanos ausentes*) was to relegate the formerly predominant sugar industry to a lower rank.

The national bourgeoisie that had come into being around the end of the nineteenth century, was now supplemented by and was being amalgamated with this new industrial and business elite the leaders of which, as Frank Moya Pons observes in his *Empresarios en conflicto* (1992:360-61), were often educated abroad, were politically sophisticated, had extensive networks, and tended to intermarry. The social origins of this new grouping were diverse. Not a few of its members came themselves from the older bourgeoisie, others were "new men" who had risen to considerable heights in Trujillo's time, others again were successful first- or second-generation Spanish or Italian immigrants.

In the ensuing amalgamation a leading commercial/industrial/agricultural/professional class came into being, much larger than ever before, and supported, so to speak, by equally expansive layers of a vast and seemingly amorphous "middle class" whose needs for social contact and belonging were catered for by a whole array of sporting and social clubs.

To be sure, it had not been Trujillo's ideological intention to create or expand a national elite. It was all merely a consequence of his drive for industrialization. If anything, Trujillo was *against* the pretensions of the older elite that had reigned socially supreme when he came to power, and that had blackballed him, then still only a high-ranking military man, when he had tried to become a member of their exclusive Club Unión.

If there was a more conscious, yet at the same time "natural" inclination in Trujillo's appointment policy, it was his attention for those who came from a background similar to his own: "respectable" people from small towns or rural regions, people with some education, whose families might have a leading role to play in their local scene – in the professions, in business, in farming – but who were considered *de segunda* by the "old" bourgeoisie which had increasingly distanced itself from its own mixed origins.

It was a large and largely untapped layer to which such aspiring young men as Joaquín Balaguer and Juan Bosch also belonged, both early collaborators of the regime, the latter only for a few years. Both rose from this group – which I hesitate to call "petty bourgeoisie," a much-abused term which in much of academic literature is tainted with its nineteenth-century German connotations of little clerks and thrifty grocers which do not at all apply to the way of life and mentality of those we are dealing with here – a group perhaps without many capital goods or much cash at hand, but with its own land (not very valuable at the time), its domestic servants (not very costly either), its seigneurial aspirations, its access to schooling, its position as local *Dones* and, yes, a certain awareness of a growing breach between them and the aristocrats at the top, many of the latter promoted to that status within living memory.⁶

This is, on the other hand, not to say that Trujillo did not employ persons from this "high" elite. On the contrary, in all government departments he made intensive use of their education and talents and with few exceptions, they served him well, always aware, of course, that they, like anybody else, could never be sure how long they would keep their job.

Yet it seems fair to say that *los de segunda* profited more from an increase in income and prestige, made possible by the growth of the economy and the bureaucracy and by what were perceived as the president's favors; many of them

6. Of the Dominican historians who attach great value to the concept of "petty bourgeoisie," Juan Bosch is one of the most influential. In his *La pequeña burguesía en la historia de la República Dominicana*, he maintains that in his country the petty bourgeoisie was and still is numerically stronger than the rest of the population, consisting as it does of five "layers": from high, middle and low to poor low and very poor low (p. 3). At times the class struggle between these low and high layers was as bitter "as it would have been if we had dealt with /separate/ antagonistic classes" (p. 99).

were his staunchest supporters for many years, and the intermediate social position of this supportive group was undoubtedly of strategic political significance. All in all, the social mobility, both of the structural and the politico-social type, during the Trujillo period, especially its first two decades, was considerable. In a recent interview, ninety-two-year-old Asunción Brugal *viuda* Batlle, a member of one of Puerto Plata's leading families – of whom she gladly acknowledges that it got its wealth from its collaboration with the earlier dictator Heureaux – said that “Trujillo finished with Puerto Plata ‘society’”. From the start he appointed in his government uncouth people, without the necessary education and training, and he began to mix people” (in the same interview though, she fondly remembers some “dear friends” among the high civil servants of the regime). She also deplored the end of certain social clubs, and Trujillo's negative attitude to the “marked European influence” which had characterized Puerto Plata.⁷

Andrés L. Mateo (1998), an influential writer and sociologist of the younger generation, recently called this mobility in the early Trujillo years “gigantic,” a “pulverization of the [old] social stratification.”

THE SOCIAL CLASSES AFTER TRUJILLO: GROWTH AND DIVERGENCE

Immediately after the breakdown of the regime, an influential part of the “old families,” members of the early bourgeoisie and of the old Club Unión – long since disbanded – tried hard to regain the predominant position they had held well into the 1920s. Their political party Unión Cívica Nacional clearly and perhaps rather naively announced its restorative intentions, demanding a drastic overhaul of the entire civil service and the armed forces, thereby creating a sense of dramatic insecurity among the tens of thousands who had served the government of the last thirty years and who were now held publicly and collectively responsible (as some of them, to be sure, were) for reproachable conduct while in service.

The first post-Trujillo elections were won by Juan Bosch's Partido Revolucionario Dominicano (PRD), on the face of it, not because of any ideological preference, but because Bosch had been deliberately measured in his evaluation of the past regime and had promised to generally keep the civil service and the armed forces intact, using the slogan “*borrón y cuenta nueva*” (let bygones be bygones). In this way he assured his party of the support of those many voters who wanted continuity, at least insofar as their own jobs were concerned. He thus became the guarantor of the achievements of *los de segunda* (and much of the temerarious mass below them) against the risk of a restoration of the *ancien régime*.

After the death of the dictator, and before fleeing the country, his eldest son had donated Trujillo's large sugar interests “to the Nation” (Crassweller

7. *Listín Diario*, 14 febrero 1999.

1966:445). Many of his other properties were soon after expropriated, except when co-owners/business friends or marionettes of the dictator succeeded in having their claims legally recognized (Moya Pons 1992:79ff.). This “state patrimony” gave all successive governments economic assets – with their attendant potential for patronage – of a size truly exceptional for a non-socialist country, as Moya Pons (1992:79) has rightly observed.

The state had formally become the largest employer. The favors which victorious parties in the newly democratic republic could grant were and are more substantial than ever before. Small wonder that every political party, once in power, was reluctant to abolish these spectacular opportunities for politico-social mobility, including featherbedding and corruption. Only recently, after ample and longlasting proof of the disastrous economic consequences of these practices, a plan for partial privatization of these state enterprises was approved and set in motion.

In countries where no one in the entire public (and very few, to be sure, in the private) sector can foresee when one will lose one’s job, where the chances of finding another one are very scarce, and where there is no welfare system to speak of, conformity to the guidelines for civic behavior in a democratic and lawful society is more exacting, and preserving one’s moral integrity is many times harder than in the few more privileged societies of this planet, and even there – as we know – it is not easy. For the poorer part of the population excuses are easily found; those of the better-off who easily fall prey to their greed, are perhaps (also) driven by their fear that one’s fortunes may change very quickly, and opportunities are rare. Perhaps the mood of understanding embodied in the recent proposal in the Dominican Congress to proclaim a general amnesty for all civil servants who since 1978 have been accused of unlawful financial transactions, should be seen in this light.⁸ (Fortunately, the proposal did not receive enough backing).

At any rate, corruption has been, and still is, a well-tried vehicle for vertical ascent, while at the same time it is, of course, undermining the reliability of the state’s institutions.

At this point we should perhaps remind ourselves again that by 1960, at the end of the dictatorship, the country only had some three million inhabitants, about one third of what it has now. The capital city had grown rapidly, though, in the previous ten years: from 150,000 in 1950 to 367,000 in 1960 (Instituto de Estudios del Caribe 1962:2). Larger demographic shifts were still to come, however, including rural-urban migration and emigration to the United States. By 1981, the number of Dominicans in the United States was estimated at between 300,000 and 500,000, virtually all of them having arrived after 1961, and especially after the civil war and foreign intervention of 1965, when violence and a critical economic situation had triggered an exodus (del Castillo 1981:153ff.).

8. *Listín Digital*, 10/11 julio, 1998.

In varying ways, this vast group of *dominicanos ausentes* (which has been growing fast since then) exerts some influence on stratification and mobility in their country of origin. The least noted perhaps is the lessening of demographic pressure and hence of job competition; if only because of the continuing high natural growth rate – some 3 percent – plus the steady immigration (especially from Haiti) into the country. Great importance, on the other hand, is attributed to the effect of the remittances from overseas, not only to support relatives but also to invest in houses, land, and businesses, thereby providing work and jobs. There are also migrants who return and who exert a definite influence, both economically and in social behavior, on their local environment. I need not emphasize that, unfortunately, not all such influences are seen as beneficial, and that not all cases of – sometimes spectacular – enrichment and ensuing upward economic (if not always social) mobility are a result of legal and socially approved activity. (This goes, it should be said, for other societies too, today and in the past, though perhaps moreso for the Caribbean region where general poverty is combined with a long tradition of smuggling and piracy, often depicted as picturesque and the longer ago the deeds were done the more respectable it was.)

The drug trade comes to mind here, but also – to mention a quite different category – the work of the many women who, in countries all over the globe, earn their money as what is euphemistically called *bailarinas*, and whose houses or *colmados* bought with their savings, often located in the poorest sections of the country, are, not without pride, pointed out to the visitor (Imbert Brugal 1991). There are, to be sure, more felicitous role models than these; we may think of successful professional baseball players or musicians, but the chances of becoming one of them are, unfortunately, much smaller.

The wish to leave the rural areas in search of a better life got stronger rather than weaker in the twentieth century. There were roads built which made previously isolated areas accessible; there were laws that abolished and split up for private use the old *terrenos comuneros* (1911), or that stimulated the uninhibited expansion of sugar plantations, expropriating large numbers of small peasants in the process, or tax laws, like that of 1910, that harmed hundreds of small rural rum producers with their *alambiques* (Moya Pons 1977:453), or a property law (1919) that was seriously hurting the Cibao peasantry (San Miguel 1995:48-49); there were also, in these earlier decades, the periods of regional military and political violence, when rural dwellers were traditionally submitted to extortion or theft, and inclined to flee; there was, later, the rapidly increasing scarcity of available land for peasant farming, in part related to the dramatic population increase, in part due to rationalizing tendencies in agriculture, leading to larger and more capital-intensive units.

In the teeming cities where the migrants headed for, they arrived with the illusion of finding work for themselves and for their many children; they also hoped these children might get some schooling which indeed, well into the 1960s, was often of acceptable quality, and was free.

But in the massive migratory groundwave from the 1960s on (and sustained generally by the rapid population growth), both the educational and the medical systems were tragically drowning. Government schools and free government clinics deteriorated, giving rise to a large number of private schools and private clinics, all competing with each other and all without external control. Their quality varied greatly, as did their fees. The poorest inhabitants could not afford any of them and remained dependent on increasingly deficient government services.

Similarly, part of the system of higher education where teachers and medical doctors had to be trained, was also to reach a state of near collapse. New private institutions, from high schools to universities, were established, their quality varying from more than acceptable to very deplorable indeed, and all demanding impressive fees, prohibitive for many, if not most, aspiring students among the poor. The old State University quickly fell prey to rampant politization. Imitating examples from abroad, it further compounded matters by establishing a policy of open admission (and, in effect, open and permanent free study). Its enrollment, which in 1920 had amounted to 169 (Gobierno Militar 1920:116) and which in the early 1960s did not exceed a few thousand, by the end of the 1970s had reached some 35,000 students, and today is estimated at some 100,000.

At first sight, such an explosive growth should be welcomed as a clear sign of the "democratization" of higher education. And indeed, as one observer José del Castillo (1981:151-52) noted:

After Trujillo's death, what with the opening up of higher education to the *sectores populares* by way of liberalization of admission mechanisms, the expansion of the educational credit system, and the establishment of multiple types of scholarships, university education becomes the paramount channel for mobility, "*irrumpiendo el negro en forma masiva en el escenario académico.*" Since then [...] the blacks have begun to break the "poverty cycle" by profiting without hesitation from the opportunities offered by the educational system. If in the Trujillo period the military career had provided the best chances for black mobility in Dominican society, in the period thereafter formal education has become its pre-eminent substitute.

It is certainly true that, even more than before, the urgent hope to improve one's prospects by way of education is palpable everywhere, also – and perhaps especially – amongst those whose other resources are precariously scarce. Everyone knows in his immediate environment examples of near-desperate sacrifices made for the sake of obtaining an education, and it is also true that the students at the congested campus of the Universidad Autónoma appear more than ever before to fairly represent the Dominican population at large.

But some caution about the meaning of all this may be well advised. Already back in 1977 the Chilean expert in higher education, Felipe Richardson, noted in a scathing report that there were no reliable data at all about those few ("*algunos*") "students of modest social origins" who allegedly had succeeded in graduating from this institution. Of all those students who had begun their stud-

ies simultaneously, and were supposed to graduate in 1975, only 15 percent had actually done so. In 1964, the comparable percentage still had been 60. With students from the lower social strata having to pass through increasingly defective primary and secondary schools, the number of *bachilleres* (those who have finished secondary school) is alarmingly low to start with. Small wonder that at the State University, a slow process – costly for all concerned – of (negative) selection weeds out many of them. For this university, the solution, as Richardson emphasized, lies not in simply demanding more money from government, as it is wont to do, but in vigorously tackling its harmful deficiencies in organization, teaching, and research. Richardson's diagnosis and recommendations are still valid today, and as recently as June 1998, after a plan for some changes in the evaluation of student achievements had finally been proposed, we could witness the predictable riots, after which the matter was left to further consideration.

It is a perverse irony that, with its leading student factions often waving the banner of revolutionary action in favor of the underprivileged, the State University has deteriorated into a corrupt institution, infested by political rivalries and featherebedding; there are surely also members of the academic community who are well-intentioned and capable, but the institutional shortcomings seem to leave them with a sense of impotence. The degrees the university confers are often of such a doubtful quality that they do not warrant the expectations created amongst those meant to profit from the university's "democratization," nor justify the sacrifices many of these very poor people make to attain them.

Once they leave this type of university, diploma in hand, they will have to compete with alumni from private, better, and more expensive institutions. (Some of them perhaps would have been better served if they had enrolled in less pretentious but more solid intermediary technical institutes.)

Those of us who can look back on events and trends in the Dominican Republic for the last forty years or so, are all awed, I think, by the dramatic expansion of the population, of the cities, of the wealthy and middle classes, of the lower middle sector, and definitely, also of the poor and very poor.

While this staggering expansion took place, the lines of demarcation were, just as happened in the early twentieth century, more clearly drawn: between the classes, especially those at either pole of the social spectrum: between the parts of town they inhabit; between the free or inexpensive, but often deficient, public schools for the very poor children and the expensive private schools for the children of the well-off; and, similarly, between the free or cheap public hospitals, poorly equipped and staffed, and the well-run private clinics. This is not to deny, of course, that a vast, varied, and expanding intermediate sector makes itself strongly felt as well.

The times of the good old *escuela pública* where it was not rare for a competent teacher to have rich and poor in his or her classroom, lie behind us and belong to the memories of today's elderly.

The same disintegration of public services we find in such sectors as security (private security guards vs public police), and energy (private vs collective electricity generation). In all these cases the good private service is for the better-off, and an impoverished and defective service is for the poorer section of the public.

This dividing-up of essential services leads to a serious loss of unifying strands in the social fabric; the sense of national community is weakened when a small part of the population is no longer affected by the dramatically deteriorating quality of what were once common goods.

DOMINICAN EXCEPTIONS? A FEW NOTES ON "COLOR," STRATIFICATION, AND IDENTITY

Of course, this atrophy and degradation of formerly common goods and spaces is not peculiar to the Dominican Republic; it started earlier in other societies, and can today be observed in very prosperous ones.

Indeed, the country's exceptionality, at which I hinted by way of introduction, is, for our purposes, largely limited to the instances I mentioned there. In many other respects developments in the Dominican Republic in the twentieth century were similar to those of its neighbors. This goes without saying for global changes such as rapid population growth, urbanization, and industrialization. But it goes for several more specific phenomena as well.

For instance, irrespective of their particular political history, virtually all Hispanic-Caribbean societies today – indeed, much of the entire Caribbean and of Central America – have stronger economic links with and are undergoing a stronger cultural impact from the United States than a century ago; the modern media and means of transportation as well as the recent, very active presence of a substantial part of their populations in that country are contributing to that impact.

Further – to mention an entirely different phenomenon – virtually all sovereign countries of South America have known dictatorships of one type or another, and some of the social effects, such as an increased mobility for certain middle groups, which I alluded to when discussing the Trujillo regime, have also been observed elsewhere and explained in a similar fashion. In many of those countries it was also under regimes akin to Gino Germani's "unifying autocracies"⁹ that the state's effective control over its territory and over the levying of taxes was firmly established.

Some such regimes, from autocratic monarchies in nineteenth-century continental Europe and Japan, to republican autocracies, both at the end of the nineteenth and in the twentieth century, in Latin America and elsewhere, provided the conditions for a first spurt of, centrally financed, industrialization, a process

9. Gino Germani (1962:147ff.). He also refers to the (quasi-) "democratic" character of some caudillistic regimes, whose leader was "a menudo de origen popular," compared with the "tendencias aristocratizantes y hasta monárquicas de las élites liberales" (p. 148).

which in the earliest industrial nations had been achieved at a more leisurely pace. There are grounds for classifying Trujillo's regime in this category.¹⁰

It is on purpose that I emphasize here such commonalities, because one might well argue that an influential part of Dominican historiography has long been characterized by an emphasis on the country's uniqueness, and a negative uniqueness at that. It would not be hard to collect a number of book titles, from *El gran pesimismo dominicano* to *La República Dominicana: Una ficción* to illustrate this point. Nor would it be difficult to demonstrate how this emphasis has influenced both native and foreign opinion. (I hasten to add that a similar pessimistic national outlook can be found in the historiography of other Latin American countries, with a similar claim to uniqueness.)

Now that I am to pay some attention to "color" or "race" as an ingredient in Dominican social stratification, I am entering a field where, I believe, this penchant for somberly inclined exceptionalism is particularly pronounced. There are two causes for this. One is general and methodological: many of us write on this topic while concentrating exclusively on Dominican society. Such a lack of comparative perspective clearly favors a tendency to use *sui generis* explanations, to stress the idiosyncrasy of Dominican phenomena, to assume they are all highly peculiar. In such a way, no balance can be found between what is common to a certain type of structures and histories, and what is, indeed, only typical of the one society being studied.

There is, further, an ideological component at work: rather than viewing certain collective sentiments, judgments, and prejudices as products of long historical processes and pervasive structures, some authors, with a predilection for moral judgments, prefer to blame them on one narrowly circumscribed, specific situation, government or political leader, thereby implicitly – and placidly – absolving the rest of history and the rest of society.

Differing between themselves as the Hispanic-Caribbean societies do in certain aspects of their slavery past, their economic history, their social composition and their "race" relations, they still have very much in common in these fields, and, of course, in their language and their culture generally.

The exceptionalism I hinted at, is not directed at the position of Dominican "blacks." It may be observed in passing that if one were to look for an Hispanic-Caribbean exception on this point, there would be good arguments for the notion that the overt and flagrant cases of – at times public – discrimination of "blacks" in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century were to be found in Cuba rather than in Puerto Rico or Santo Domingo.¹¹

10. Frank Moya Pons (1992:351), carefully draws some parallels in this respect between the history of industrialization in the Dominican Republic and Japan. This is perhaps also the place to observe that Emelio Betances (1995), correctly in my view, sees the Trujillo dictatorship not as a *sui generis* product of the U.S. intervention (as is the most common version), but as part of a longer process that has its roots in the nineteenth century.

11. On Cuba, see Knight 1970; on comparisons in the Caribbean, Hoetink 1971 and 1985.

Rather, the alleged Dominican exception centers on the idea that, more than elsewhere, "the Dominican" wants to deny or de-emphasize the "African" component in his people and in his person. Of course, this inclination by itself can easily be observed in *all* societies where a large part of the population has been subordinated by "whites" for many generations; a subordination, moreover, which runs parallel with, is reinforced by, and is a reflection of the world's "racial" stratification. By "subordination" I do not refer especially or exclusively to economic ranking, but also to the predominance of "white" norms and images (Hoetink 1971 and 1973).

And in all those societies, and perhaps especially in those where the "blacks" are, for better or worse, not perceived – nor do they perceive themselves – as one solid ascriptive category, a great many "color" gradations are recognized and named, each with its own distinct social value. These designations are not necessarily always pejorative; on the contrary, they are often euphemisms, meant to avoid the general sensitivity about this subject.

Further, in all three Spanish-speaking societies in the Caribbean – where the sense of historical continuity between the pre-colonial past and the ensuing (Spanish-) colonial period must be greater than in those islands where new colonizers drove the Spanish out and started history, so to speak, all over again – it is more common for a member of the mixed-color strata to attribute his or her dark skin color to a remote Amerindian ancestor rather than to a "black" one, and it is impolite to question this. (In Cuba, president Batista was commonly called "el Jefe indio.")

This being the case, it is hard to understand why some authors maintain that the Dominican "white wish" and lack of "black" self-esteem are particularly pronounced, and that the frequent use of the term *indio* when speaking of (or to) dark-skinned people is one of the symptoms.¹² It is hard to see why this term is more than just one of those euphemisms I mentioned, and perfectly comparable to *mestizo*, widely used in many Afro-American countries as a substitute for the socially less acceptable *mulato*.¹³

An aggravating circumstance to some is that the term was allegedly imposed by Trujillo as a substitute for *mulato* as "proven" by the frequency it is used in the *cédula de identidad*, an identity card common to much of Latin America,

12. There is no unanimity of the meaning of *indio*. I have heard it often referred to as a special tone of reddish-brown; Pérez Cabral (1967:72) also considers it one of many color gradations such as *mulato claro*, *negro lavado*, *tipo canela*, etc. The historian Rubén Silié (1981:164) argues that in the eighteenth century the term was applied to themselves by Haitian blacks entering the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo, so as to "legitimate" their presence vis-à-vis the creolized blacks there. Later, he writes, the term was applied by white creoles to creole blacks. However, in the French colony of St. Domingue in the eighteenth century it was not uncommon either for elite mulattoes to request an official recognition of their "Indian" origins (Bonniol 1992:101). In the opinion of Bernardo Vega (1981:52-53), the term *indio* today is used for mulattoes rather than blacks.

13. The Dominicans of course do not believe, as is sometimes said, that they are *actually* native Americans! When Dominicans see that a foreigner is trying to take advantage of them, the tried and trusted reply is "You don't believe we are Indians, do you?"

which he introduced in the country. This argument would be more convincing, however, if the dictator had ordered that also in the censuses of his regime the word *mulato* should no longer be used, but this is not the case.¹⁴ The reason for this difference seems simple: one's personal identity card was constantly used for all kinds of purposes and read by others; it therefore had to conform to the socially acknowledged preference for certain "racial" terms. The census data, on the other hand, were anonymous, without a need to take individual preferences into account. Here then, the official, "scientific" term of the period was used.

While evaluating ideas and practices related to "race," some of us, I am afraid, do not always take into account that at least until the late 1950s an influential part of the intellectual establishment, world-wide, still adhered to notions and condoned practices that are considered reprehensible today. In the United States, which was to play such a laudable and pioneering role in instigating legal change in this area, racial segregation in education and public transportation was still common in the 1950s in several states, lynchings did still occur, and in some serious psychological studies a careful distinction was made between "Americans" and "Negroes" (Hoetink 1971:155).

Small wonder that it is also easy to detect "racist" notions in the work of the vast majority of those Cuban, Puerto Rican, or Dominican¹⁵ intellectuals from virtually all political persuasions, who were active in the years prior to the introduction in the United States of drastic changes in legal rules and practices, in public language, and in the codes of public behavior related to "race" relations, changes which in turn did not miss their effect in their own societies.

In the process, certain terms acquired a less equivocal meaning than they had before. Thus, in the twentieth century's early decades, the word "race" was at times also used to denote a "people," as the odes to the "British race" or the less than flattering descriptions in the United States of the immigrating Italian or Polish "races" demonstrate. Here, though, the notion of biological determinism was much weaker (if at all present) than when the word was used for the world's large (and ill-definable) phenotypical categories. Today, the word is used in this latter meaning only. In Spanish, where the word *raza* also had these two meanings, a similar process – perhaps under international influence – took place:

14. Witness Pérez Cabral (1967:113ff.). The notion that it was the Trujillo regime which established *indio* as an "official and popular description of Dominican race" can be found, based only on the *cédula* argument, in Howard (1997:71ff.); a revised version is to be published at the end of 2000 by Signal Books, Oxford.

15. Of these, Joaquín Balaguer is commonly singled out. This is understandable, given his political significance. He allowed his *La realidad dominicana*, dating from 1937, to be republished with only slight alterations as *La isla al revés: Haití y el destino dominicano* in 1983, when the author, nearly eighty, was president. Its dated racist opinions immediately drew much critical attention. A critical study of Balaguer as eclectic social thinker should also include an essay, originally written and published in 1947, later reprinted as *Prólogo* for José Ramón López, *El gran pesimismo dominicano*, in which he approvingly quotes Ruth Benedict's conviction that "race" only becomes a source of conflict when it acquires the characteristics of a class.

recently the internationally celebrated *Día de la raza* was changed into *Día de la hispanidad*. This latter term, however, meets with criticism from some who, suspecting a suggestion of biological determinism, think the *Día* should also explicitly celebrate the Amerindian and "black" "races," while others, emphasizing the cultural connotations of the word, believe that the non-"Hispanic" cultures should be included in the celebration. In judging some authors' older work, and the use they make of terms like these, it would be fair, I think, not to apply our current definitions to terms used differently in another period.¹⁶

In a country like the Dominican Republic, with a population which for a large part is of mixed (mulatto) origin, judgments about acts of discrimination are not always easy and unequivocal. There is certainly, especially in the area of selection for more prominent positions, a bias in favor of "whites" or of mixed-color strata that more closely approach the "whiter" end of the continuum; such preferences are clearly also at work in the field of more intimate social relations such as the selection of marriage partners.

All this is not, in itself, different from the other Spanish-speaking societies in the Caribbean. It is perhaps typical, though, of the Dominican Republic that its mixed-color strata, numerous as they are, occupy a vast number of positions in all walks of life, which means that persons looking for a job are not seldom selected or rejected by members of the mixed strata, and any suspicion of bias may well be directed toward them. In this respect there is, perhaps, a greater similarity with certain smaller Caribbean islands.

On the other hand, the line between "black" and "mixed" is a fluid one, and so is, to a certain extent, the line between "white" and the "lightest" strata of the mixed-color group. Nor are *all* the richest or prestigious people "white" or light-skinned, or *all* the poorest people very dark or "really black." Yet it is certainly a fact that the majority of the industrial and commercial elite today are perceived as "white" or light-skinned, their numbers having increased during the past one hundred years, as we saw, by the absorption of successful immigrants. And it is also true that a majority of the very poor are dark- or black-skinned and that this economic category, as we also saw, has grown drastically in this period, both by natural increase and immigration.

In recent decades, as already suggested, also in the Dominican Republic changes have taken place in the "racial" discourse, in the use of certain symbols, in attitudes expressed verbally or in written form, all of these expressive of a new "political correctness." Without careful and detailed research it is impossible to determine the concrete effects of these changes.

The Dominican immigrants in the United States will, I'm sure, often make comparisons between the "racial" culture and structure of their native society and those of their adopted country, and it is tempting to speculate that, depending on

16. In an interesting article "Hispanidad and National Identity in Santo Domingo," in which he compares the use by Balaguer and Franco of terms such as these, Meindert Fennema (1998) does, however, take their historical context into account.

their position in the Dominican color-spectrum, some will feel attracted to the openness and combativeness in much of the North American "racial" discourse, while others feel embittered about being grouped in a "racial" category to which at home they never belonged. The intriguing question is whether such experiences change anything at all within the U.S. Dominican community itself, apart from, perhaps, a greater urge than before – at least for a large portion of the "mixed" strata of this community – to preserve their "Dominicanness" for as long as possible. But these are just guesses, and the same goes for the possible influence of these immigrants on the situation in their country of origin. Perhaps the impact of U.S. television programs there is at least as great – or small. Recently, Silvio Torres-Saillant (1998) has suggestively addressed some of these questions.

In the "social sections" of the Dominican press and television, and in the commercials directed at the middle and upper classes, there is – and there always was – a tendency to prefer the light-colored and "white" and to de-emphasize the "real black," except in "appropriate" cases. One need not leave the country to realize that this is not an exclusively Dominican phenomenon: a look at the widely popular soap operas of Mexican, Venezuelan, or Brazilian origin, shown on Dominican television, suffices.

While this whole set of practices and preferences decidedly do not have their origins in the Trujillo regime,¹⁷ it is undeniable that the pervasive influence, directly or indirectly, of his government on education and the media, plus the improvements in infrastructure and communication realized in that period, made it possible for the emphasis on the Amerindian and Spanish-colonial past and heritage, on the importance of the Spanish language as part of this heritage *and* as an identity marker, and on the Catholic Church for similar reasons, to reach the entire population with more insistence than before. It was all part of a nationalist ideology for which the ingredients had already been "invented" much earlier (and were, to be sure, not at all exceptional)¹⁸; the appetite for them had certainly also been stimulated by the humiliating experience of the U.S. military intervention.

The Trujillo regime in its thirty years has committed a number of atrocities and many other reprehensible acts and it has been accused of more. I do not, however, think that it has convincingly been accused of fomenting or practising more actual "racist" discrimination in Dominican society than any of its prede-

17. There exists an extensive literature on "race" and "racism" in the Dominican Republic. An excellent overview as well as an intelligent analysis can be found in San Miguel 1997.

18. Any identity, of course, exists by the grace of boundaries or markers which are perceived as clearly distinguishing it from others. Nationalist rhetoric is based on the celebration of such markers. Where a nation-state finds its origins in a war against another nation, this antagonist will generally be depicted for centuries to come in stark, often (quasi-)racist, terms. European examples abound. In Dutch national ideology, for example, such a demonic quality has always been attributed to the Spanish. When a neighboring state is perceived as the main antagonist, as the Dutch have seen Germany since World War II, feelings become even more virulent, if possible, and might profitably be subjected to the diagnostic insights which the Dutch authors Meindert Fennema and Troetje Loewenthal have used in their *La construcción de raza y nación en la República Dominicana* (1987).

cessors or, indeed, successors. On the contrary, the "populist" character of the regime worked, as several notable cases seem to suggest, rather in the opposite direction. Here, as so often, we do well to separate ideology from practice, the nationalist rhetorical image-mongering, shockingly one-sided as it strikes us today, from the well-established social practices, motivated by the reality of political expediency, kinship, geographic origin, and clientelism.

"HAITI" AND THE DOMINICAN STRATIFICATION

Efforts to defend and settle the border areas between the Dominican Republic and Haiti date back from right after the Treaty of Rijswijk (1697) when France acquired the Western one third of the island. Throughout the nineteenth century, and in the first decades of the twentieth century, various governments were active in this respect. Trujillo's policy of fostering a "*dominicanización de la frontera*" was, then, neither new nor exceptional.

Further, the events leading to Santo Domingo's independence from Haiti (1844), after two decades of "union" or "occupation," as well as the various Haitian invasions before and after this period, have led to a long tradition of mutually adverse collective sets of prejudices, judgments, and images of both peoples – the common Dominicans and Haitians included.¹⁹

Throughout their history, belligerent speeches, defiant acts, and aggressive plans could be heard and seen on both sides of the border, from virtually all political leaders and from much of the two intellectual establishments. The Haitians were more threatening in the nineteenth century when they were numerically and economically superior; from the beginning of the twentieth century on, the power relations were reversed; even so, the old irredentist notion (dating back to the turn of the eighteenth century) of an island, "*une et indivisible*," could be heard again in one of Haiti's very recent governments.

For the Dominicans the most shameful point in these relations undoubtedly was reached with the 1937 Dominican mass massacre in the border area. This crime, together with the nationalist and anti-Haitian stance of the Trujillo government, has suggested to many commentators since that Trujillo's and, by extension, Dominican racism found and finds an outlet in their aversion of Haitians, and that the relations between the two countries, including, of course, the irritant of degrading collective-hiring practices of Haitian laborers for the sugar industry, were inextricably intertwined with Dominican collective racist prejudices only. In international fora such a point of view is still often expressed. Recently, it nearly paralyzed Dominican public opinion and policy, because pro-

19. For perceptions of the "common" Dominican, see Cordero 1975. It should be noted, however, that all this did not prevent frequent social contacts, not only in the border area, about which Lauren Derby has written her 1994 prize-winning article, but also between urban elite families in certain periods (Hoetink 1992:132-45).

posals and measures, considered to be acceptable if taken in other countries, ran the danger of being rejected as racist.²⁰

The pity of all this is that it seriously obstructs our view. There are, one would think, two major problems here which demand two different approaches. One problem is that of mutually adverse images and opinions and a general lack of knowledge and information. All the obvious ways to overcome this – e.g., more travel, more cooperation, more exchanges of persons and cultural goods, more common symposia – are now being put into practice, often with foreign aid, and this is useful, on condition that such efforts do not hide ulterior motives.

The second problem is that of two contiguous countries surrounded by sea, with a common border of great porosity, one country ranking somewhere in the middle of the world economic scale, the other near the very bottom, and with desperately little prospects of improving its situation even in the longer term, due to such problems as a very high demographic pressure, extremely low schooling rates, nearly maximal deforestation, and severe erosion; problems which do not lend themselves to a quick fix.

There are those who prefer to paper over the vast macro-economic differences between the two countries. In some foreign capitals, the convenient conviction that both are “black” and “poor” does not allow for politically complicating nuances. Others, closer to these countries, take a similar stance, this time out of feelings of sympathy or solidarity, or perhaps out of fear for being considered prejudiced. It all clouds the discussion, and hinders the search for viable and mutually beneficial solutions.

For as long as both nations exist, significant lower-class geographic mobility has only been directed from West to East. Cruel treatment and very low wages may have triggered international protests from time to time, but have not weakened the Haitian readiness to cross the border.

This entirely understandable drift of large numbers of Haitians to the Dominican Republic is met with conflicting responses. On the one hand, complaints in the media are phrased in terms of health risks, danger of more crime, damage to national and cultural values and other perceived or real risks. On the other hand, employers continue contracting Haitians for very low wages in agriculture and in construction, leaving the nationals – if these have not already left – without work. (A stronger state, one might argue²¹ might find a humane solution by enforcing “Dominican” wages for both Dominicans and foreigners, or by a “civilized” repatriation, but we know of stronger states elsewhere, incapable of such enforcement.)

Clearly, political stability in Haiti and the start of viable, manageable, and “absorbable” development projects which at least create some hope in that country, would also be in the interest of Santo Domingo and, indeed, of the wider

20. For an effort to describe and analyze recent developments in this area, see Corten & Duarte 1996.

21. See Vega (1991:233-55); also referred to in Corten & Duarte (1996:98).

Caribbean. The Haitian dilemma has, indeed, international dimensions and its solution, if one exists, cannot depend solely on its neighbor. Isn't there, after all, even under the most lenient of definitions, a limit as to how many unskilled and destitute immigrants the Dominican Republic can absorb before fatally jeopardizing its own economic viability?

In the meantime, the continuing willingness and capacity of Haitians to cross the border illegally, uncertain of finding work even for wages unacceptable to Dominicans, has already created a formidable urban *Lumpenproletariat* of migrants, a pool of unskilled labor, with a negative effect on the (already deplorable) position and chances for upward mobility of the lowest strata of Dominican society, many of whom belong to a similar pool. In this critical situation public demands "to protect the national labor market" are to be expected, and recently a committee with precisely such a name was formed,²² reminding us of similar campaigns in Cuba and Santo Domingo in the 1930s.

The bitter irony of all this is that while the higher and middle classes have been growing, and are not wary of their economic future, what with expanding *zonas francas*, tourism, and other service industries, it is the badly trained Dominican workers who have to leave their traditional niches in agriculture and construction, and to join a mass of urban poor which, as we have seen, has been growing quickly anyhow in the last decades.

The overall picture of changes in mobility and stratification in the last hundred years is, like all pictures, a mixture of light, grey, and darkness. It is a moving picture, with great, at times nearly cataclysmic, changes generally in the direction of greater complexity, the ladder of stratification growing longer and wider. Many families, looking back, will consider their relative positions improved; some have remained behind, suffering a sense of stagnation, and yet another group, probably larger than the others, has seen its position, low as it already was, deteriorate further.²³ To improve their situation is a daunting and urgent task, of vital importance to the society at large and its stability.

22. *Listín Digital*, 30 junio 1998. No further details were given.

23. According to some 'macro'-studies, indicators such as infant mortality, nutrition of children under six, life expectancy, and illiteracy, have shown an improvement over the last three decades. Also, between 1986 and 1992, poverty is believed to have diminished generally, except in households headed by someone without any schooling. Households with more than seven members are at a disadvantage as well (Jaime Aristy & Andy Dauhajre, *Efectos de las políticas macroeconómicas y sociales sobre la pobreza en la República Dominicana*; this is part of a recent UNDP report, edited by Enrique Ganuza, and mentioned in a review by Rodríguez, 1998; I do not know the report itself). If these favorable data are reliable, there still remains the threat of an underclass with unschooled heads of large households.

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TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF?
THE HAVANA CIGAR REVISITED

The year 1993 marked the most significant turning point for Cuban agricultural policy since the sweeping agrarian reforms following the country's 1959 Revolution.¹ Most striking of all was the transformation of state farms into Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC). As a result, the proportion of state-run agricultural land was radically reduced, from 75 percent in 1992 to 30 percent in 1995. Simultaneously, individual plots of land were given either for food self-sufficiency (*autoconsumo*) or smaller-scale cash crops such as tobacco. The restructuring of land tenure patterns and the regeneration of the peasantry (*recampezinación*) were seen as essential to stimulate production to meet the domestic food crisis and to boost quality export crops such as tobacco. The emphasis was on a combined package of market mechanisms and social regulation to increase yields, profitability, and food self-sufficiency. Production was now linked to a defined area of land (*la vinculación del hombre al area*), thereby reining in the "bigger is better" syndrome (*gigantomanía*) and simulating the conditions of the smallholder plot within larger productive forms.

This was a remarkable, if understated, policy switch from previous agrarian reforms, when early massive land appropriations were made by the state, and subsequently, in the late 1970s, the shrinking peasant sector was given a strong incentives package to move beyond the loosely organized Credit and Service

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 22nd Annual Conference of the Latin American Studies Association, Miami, Florida, March 2000. It forms part of wider research for a monograph on the island and offshore Havana cigar, 1868-1998. I am grateful for support and financial assistance from my own University of North London and from a British Academy small research grant in summer 1997, and for being awarded two Rockefeller Scholarships, one on the Caribbean 2000 program at the University of Puerto Rico and one at the Cuban Research Institute, Florida International University, in the spring and summer of 1998, as well as a Visiting Fellowship at the Department of Caribbean Studies, Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology, Leiden, in autumn 1998. My thanks go to many colleagues for their support and encouragement and for generously contributing to my work in so many ways.

Cooperatives (CCS) to Agricultural Production Cooperatives (CPA). The ideology underpinning policy equated modernization with large, mechanized units of production and saw state farms as the superior form of production, cooperatives as next best, and smallholder peasant farming as backward, inefficient, and destined to disappear.

The tobacco sector arguably helped usher in this *volte face*. Tobacco, always an anomaly in revolutionary agrarian history, still accounted for some 70 percent in the smallholder sector and cooperative sector. In the latter, tobacco CPAs were among the first to experience problems with profitability and diseconomies of scale in the early 1980s and among the first to experience de-collectivization in the late 1980s.² Toward the end of the 1990s, the trend was quite clear and moving away from state farm to UBPC and, in 1998, in tobacco in particular, from CPA to CCS *fortalecido* (strengthened CCS).

What further differentiated cigar leaf from other tobacco and agricultural sectors as of 1994 was that it was a pioneer in attracting joint venture capital from overseas marketing companies, including crop pre-financing and dollar-incentive payments to growers and workers to improve quality and productivity. In the process of what was described as a "tobacco recuperation" program, yielding increased output of quality leaf, some of the old tobacco growers on family farms began to reap relative, and in some cases quite substantial, financial and other gains. Octogenarian Alejandro Robaina, whose farm is in the heartland of Pinar del Río's famed Vuelta Abajo region, is one who now travels the world with his tobacco. Declared 1999 *Habano* man of the year, he netted US\$ 15,000 (a small fortune in Cuba) and has Vegas Robaina cigars, made from his leaf, named after him.

In effect, reforms in the cigar sector not only turned around a severe cigar crisis; they also pioneered wider policy responses to a crisis triggered by the post-1989 demise of the Eastern European socialist bloc, a crisis of dramatic proportions hitting all sectors of the economy. Such radical internal developments in cigar tobacco growing, I argue here, can only be understood in their wider context, both historical and contemporary. Thus, what follows provides first a brief historical backdrop and then a detailed account culled from specialized journalistic coverage of the crucial three-year period, 1992-94, when Cuba sank to, and pulled out of, the depths of its post-1989 crisis. This was precisely when competition from the post-1992 boom of what I have come to call the "offshore Havana cigar," made with Havana seed leaf grown outside Cuba, became particularly fierce. I conclude by considering scholarly interpretations of the 1990s agrarian reforms in Cuba and emphasize the need to foreground the interplay between external and internal factors. Without reference to this interaction, I contend, it is impossible to understand how and why Cuba is "turning over a new leaf."

2. In 1992, only 32 percent of tobacco land was in state hands, 22 percent in CPA, and 43 percent in CCS, leaving a residual 3 percent in other plots. By late 1996, the cooperative sector comprised 54 percent of tobacco land, but made up largely of UBPC (43 percent), with CPA trailing behind (11 percent).

THE OFFSHORE CONNECTION

Cuba's tobacco product par excellence, the cigar, considered since the mid-nineteenth century to be the best in the world, has been long imitated elsewhere.³ This was a process fostered by Cuba's own political history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century political upheavals and emigration, creating émigré communities and rival economies. The cigar was one of the products manufactured by the émigré Cubans thus creating an "offshore" next to the island Havana cigar, for non-U.S. and U.S. markets.

After the 1959 Revolution, émigré Cuban cigar tobacco communities grew up in Nicaragua-Honduras and Costa Rica, joining older ones in the Caribbean – Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic – Mexico and the United States – Florida, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Smaller manufacturers, dealers, growers and workers profited from the post-1959 internal economic upheaval in Cuba that was the product of insurrection, agrarian reform, and nationalization, plus the tight trade embargo that was the political response of the United States (and for a while the whole area) to the Cuban Revolution. While Eastern European bloc and Third World countries emerged as Havana cigar partners, Western European markets became a battleground for disputed Havana cigar brands.

Thirty years on, a new chapter opened when the demise of the Eastern European socialist bloc in 1989 signalled the end of Cuba's special trade and aid relationship. At the same time, the United States took steps to tighten and extra-territorialize the embargo in the form of the 1991 Torricelli and 1996 Helms-Burton Acts. As external geopolitical realities compounded internal weaknesses, both economic and political, the Cuban revolutionary government devised a short-, mid- and long-term structural adjustment strategy, courting non-U.S. trade and investment. The Havana cigar became a key player, as Cuban production plummeted, and battles fought in international courts over market brand names were but the more visible tip of a cigar war. A U.S. cigar revival was gaining momentum, involving the two U.S. cigar giants – Connecticut-based General Cigar and Consolidated Cigar in Fort Lauderdale – along with émigré Cuban tobacco interests, in the Dominican Republic especially, followed by Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Connecticut, in all-out competition with island Cuba.

This was the backdrop to the 1993 land reforms and the 1994 introduction of part-dollar payments as an incentives package for the tobacco sector, along with the setting up of a new holding company, Habanos S.A., to handle overseas marketing ventures. Both measures followed fast in the wake of two landmark "credit for tobacco swap" deals struck between the Cuban state tobacco enterprise, Cubatabaco, and its French and Spanish parastatal tobacco counterparts –

3. This I noted, but did not develop, in my monograph on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Cuban tobacco history, Stubbs 1985.

Société Nationale des Tabacs (SEITA) and Tabacalera Española S.A. A European cigar marketing joint venture was set up in Britain, with Hunters & Frankau. In 1996, a further venture was created with British-American Tobacco Company's Brazilian subsidiary, Souza Cruz, and Cuba was investing heavily in tobacco to help meet a world market demand in excess of supply. Heightened U.S.-European rivalry in the contemporary world of the Americas' cigar politics was mirrored by that within the Havana cigar universe, though there are signs this is already abating, national policies notwithstanding. In 1999, Tabacalera Española and SEITA formed Altadis (Alianza de Tabacos y Distribución), which bought 50 percent shares in Habanos S.A.; Tabacalera Española had earlier in the year bought Consolidated Cigar Co. and was thereby heavily involved in both the Havana and clone Havana cigar business.

THE CIGAR BOOM IN THE 1990S

The post-1992 U.S. hand-made cigar revival was well orchestrated. It has been attributed to aggressive marketing, more recently on internet, and most especially to the New York-based glossy *Cigar Aficionado*. Started in 1992, and by the late 1990s with a circulation of some half million, *Cigar Aficionado* caters primarily, though not exclusively, to an up-market, male, cigar smoking readership. Its features on cigar companies and personalities, combined with other accounts, provide an invaluable source of information on the years in which Cuba devised a strategy to rise out of the depths of its post-1989 crisis in a climate of fierce cigar competition.

In summer 1994, the French SEITA and the Spanish Tabacalera each agreed to finance inputs to help raise Cuban tobacco productivity – offsetting shortages of fuel, fertilizers, and pesticides that had most affected production (compounded by the 1993 hurricane in which about 60 percent of the tobacco crop was lost) – in exchange for guaranteed tobacco supplies.⁴ In 1992, Spain, Cuba's largest tobacco buyer, accounted for some 57 million cigars of Cuba's cigar exports.⁵ In 1994, the figure had dropped to 27 million cigars.

France was the second largest market after Spain. Tobacco was France's second main import from Cuba, after sugar, and has been since pre-Revolutionary days. However, disputed brands represented 53 percent of Cuba's cigar exports to France. This explains the importance attached to a July 1992 Paris court ruling to the effect that Montecristo, Partagás, H. Upmann, and Por Larrañaga belonged not to the Cuban state but to a Curaçao-based subsidiary of the U.S. Company Cuban Cigar

4. *Cuba Business*, July-August/September 1994.

5. Spain had not always figured so prominently. In 1961, political tensions between Spain and Cuba were at a height and for a whole year Spain refused to import tobacco, until the new Cuban government paid compensation to Spanish owners of tobacco firms expropriated after the Revolution. Following negotiations, a compromise was reached and Cuban exports to Spain were resumed.

Brands, which had bought the brands in 1976 and 1977 from the original owners who had left Cuba after 1959. Cuban Cigar Brands then sold to Tabacalera, which inherited the lawsuit. The brand names continued to be Tabacalera property and a restraining order was served on Cubatabaco to prevent sales in Spain and France.⁶

The 1994 Tabacalera deal was crucial in ending a long-smouldering dispute. Since early 1993, Cubatabaco had been attempting to shake Tabacalera's hold over a total of nine famous Havana cigar brands bought from their former owners on Cuba's behalf. In late 1990, incoming Tabacalera general manager Germán Calvillo went back on Tabacalera's agreement to act as intermediary in purchasing the brands. In April 1993, Cubatabaco ceded ownership of trademarks but also announced a marketing offensive in Spain involving an end of leaf tobacco sales to Tabacalera. This led to the virtual disappearance of Cuban cigars from the Spanish market, though Cuba's export revenues were also hit as unfavorable weather caused multi-million dollar damage in prime tobacco areas already affected by fuel, pesticide and fertilizer shortages. The 1994 agreement with Tabacalera outlined a twenty-year cooperation framework. Recognizing Cuba's crucial supply shortages, Tabacalera provided up to US\$ 25 million a year in gasoline, pesticides, fertilizer, and water pumps to resource-starved Cuban tobacco growers to help increase production. In return, Tabacalera would be buying 70 to 80 percent Cuban leaf and 40 percent Cuban cigars, and would have first preference in the event of a Cuban shortfall in meeting market demand. By 1996 Tabacalera expected to be selling 36 million Cuban cigars.⁷

The gravity of the Cuban situation at the time should not be underestimated. In the 1980s, Cuba exported some 120 million cigars a year, 90 percent of which were handmade. In 1990 exports were down to 80 million, 75 percent of them handmade; in 1991, 77 million; in 1992, 67 million; in 1993, 57 million, while the world demand for quality Cuban cigars could easily top 100 million. (This figure excluded the U.S. market, although it was estimated that some six to eight million cigars a year were taken in illegally.) In 1993, tobacco planting covered only one third of the projected acreage. Then, internal measures fast ensued for a "tobacco recuperation" program, and, in October, Habanos S.A. was set up as the international marketing company for Cuban cigars in all international markets except France, where it continued to be Cubatabaco. By 1994 cigar sales were up 26 percent over 1993, and the cigar recovery was being attributed to giving priority to production and the agreement with Tabacalera. Given the serious deterioration of production, Cuban Minister of Agriculture Alfredo Jordan in November announced a US\$ 3.5 million dollar allocation for part-payment to farmers, workers, and managers in tobacco agriculture, industry, distribution, and marketing. "Rapid tobacco recuperation is vital for the country to acquire the foreign exchange it needs," Minister Jordan declared.⁸

6. *Economist Intelligence Report*, 4, 1992.

7. *Washington Post*, June 17, 1994.

8. *Granma*, October 19, 1993.

This was the first such measure in Cuban agriculture, though similar payment was introduced in fisheries and electricity, and was already operative in tourism. The part-payment consisted of a voucher-incentive plan, with vouchers to purchase consumer goods in hard-currency stores. The aim was for a 1996 production back to the 1985 level of US\$ 115 million cigar exports, and a return to more direct links between retailer, manufacturer, and grower. Such links included new taste tests and the launch of new cigars. Hunters & Frankau, one-time owner of the hundred-and-fifty-year-old Havana H. Upmann factory (1922-38) and presently joint Anglo-Cuban London importer of Havana cigars, held taste tests with a social conscience. At one in September 1994, in Havana's Las Ruinas Restaurant, exclusive cigars were auctioned off at a value of US\$ 16,000, which was donated by H. Upmann to the González Coro Hospital in Havana. A second was a US\$ 1,000 per head meal in Paris for 160 persons (including U.S. citizens) selling cigars for a donation to UNICEF. By 1994, the Havana cigar was being sold in ninety countries, and *Casas del Habano* (Havana Cigar Houses) had been opened in various cities.

The Cohíba brand was especially suited to new lines. Cohíba was first made in 1968, in the newly created El Laguito factory, which was started in 1961 as a cigar-rolling school for women at a time when prestigious cigar rolling for export was the preserve of male rollers. It was originally made exclusively for President Fidel Castro (organized by a former bodyguard), and as the gift only he gave to visiting dignitaries. Made with the most select Vuelta Abajo leaf, since its commercialization in the early 1980s, it fast became the most coveted of Havana cigars. A new Cohíba Línea 1492 was presented in Seville in 1992, to mark the five hundred years of Columbus's discovery of Cuba with five cigars called Siglo I, Siglo II, Siglo III, Siglo IV, and Siglo V. When Cuba released five hundred limited edition humidors with fifty Línea 1492 cigars in autumn 1992, Hong Kong sold its eighty boxes in a few weeks; London's seventy boxes and Canada's twenty went within the month. London retailers said they could have sold twice the amount.⁹ In November 1993, a box of Cohíba cigars signed by President Castro sold at a London auction for £ 12,500, to raise money for medical aid to Cuba.¹⁰ In July 1994, news leaked that Pierre Cardin was planning to launch a new cigar called Maxim's.¹¹

A NEW EPICENTRE: THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The 1994 SEITA and Tabacalera deals ended a European deadlock on Havana cigars that had existed since 1989 when Zino Davidoff broke with Cuba. From the mid-1960s, Davidoff had a whole range of Havana cigars bearing his name, making him the leading world supplier of hand-rolled Havanas. In 1989, com-

9. *Cigar Aficionado*, Spring 1993.

10. *CubaInfo* 5(15), 1993.

11. See Spanish press agency EFE, July 26, 1994.

plaining about the poor quality of the Cuban product, Davidoff ended his business partnership and switched to Dominican suppliers.

The Dominican connection was not fortuitous but part of the wider Cuban exile story. The Dominican Republic was not historically considered a producer of quality cigar leaf.¹² In 1962, however, an emigré Cuban tobacco agronomist, Napoleón Padilla, was part of the Washington reconstruction plan after the fall of Trujillo and helped found the Institute of Tobacco in Santiago de los Caballeros, in the Cibao (Padilla 1982, 1988). Thirty years later, when Cuba was facing the depths of its post-1989 crisis and dislocation, long years of major investments and effort in the Cibao were bearing quality Havana seed leaf and cigar. The full story involved not only disputed brands, legal and counterfeit, rolled by Cuban hands in exile, but also “Cuban seed” tobacco wrapper from Connecticut and Cameroon, and filler from Jamaica, Mexico, and Honduras, as well as the Dominican Republic.

Arturo Sosa, originally from the Canary Islands,¹³ was a producer of leaf filler in Remedios until 1960, left for Key West, built up a factory from scratch in Miami’s Little Havana, and wound up manufacturing cigars in the Dominican Republic rolled with Cameroon wrappers, exporting to Fox’s of London. Similarly, Cuban-born Benjamín Menéndez, whose family once owned H. Upmann factory and the Montecristo brand, left Cuba in 1959 and, as the mid-1990s vice-president of General Cigar’s operation in the Dominican Republic, was overseeing production of Partagás (with wrapper from Cameroon) and Macanudo (with Connecticut wrapper).

The Dominican Republic had become a home of operations to major cigar manufacturers outside of Cuba such as General Cigar and Consolidated Cigar, along with Arturo Fuente, Tabacos Dominicanos, and MATASA, among others. These produced a range of premium brands for the U.S. market, including Partagás, Macunado, H. Upmann, Arturo Fuente, and Davidoff. “For most, the journey was a simple choice based on business necessity – a place to make cigars after Fidel Castro took control of the Cuban cigar industry and the U.S. trade embargo closed the doors on Cuba in 1962.”¹⁴ The Quesada family of MATASA, which started out in Cuban tobacco in the 1880s, manufactured Fonseca, Romeo y Julieta, Licenciados, Sosa, Casa Blanca, José Benito, and the new Cubita. In the 1930s, one uncle brokered tobacco in the Dominican Republic, creating a permanent family foothold there. The Quesadas left Cuba in 1960, and, with a 1961 Royal Bank of Canada £200,000 loan (no collateral), they bought warehouse facilities in the Dominican Republic. In 1972 MATASA was born, and was producing some four million cigars in 1994.

12. While not considered quality leaf, the Dominican Republic does, however, have a strong tobacco history. See Baud 1996.

13. For the involvement of Canary Islander migration in Cuban tobacco, see López Isla 1998.

14. *Cigar Aficionado*, Autumn 1992:65.

Best known in the Dominican Republic was Carlos Fuente, of Arturo Fuente & Cía. Four Fuente factories of pre-Dominican times were damaged by fire: two in Tampa – one in 1921 and another in 1948 – one in Nicaragua in 1977, and one in Honduras in 1979. After a failed effort in Tampa in 1979, with Cuban and Vietnamese labor, Fuente almost abandoned the business:

“We were left with two choices. Sell out or go to a foreign country again”, said Fuente Sr.

Civil wars or political instability in Central America argued against returning there. Mexico’s strict foreign investment laws at the time dampened expectations of a reasonable profit. And Cuba was out of bounds. In a sense, the Dominican Republic was the only option left ... The government was seeking investment and jobs, and the rapidly expanding free trade zones offered a plentiful labor pool, a satisfactory infrastructure and duty-free import and export.¹⁵

In 1992 Fuente claimed to be the largest handmade cigar factory in the world, with four hundred rollers making 18 million cigars a year, including a new Hemingway brand. Fuente’s arrival coincided with a turning point in the Dominican cigar industry. In 1976, only five million cigars were exported to the United States; in 1979, that figure had risen to eleven million, a leading player being General Cigar. Between 1979 and 1981, when Consolidated Cigar moved its operations from the Canary Islands to La Romana under Tabacalera de García, exports tripled to 33 million. In 1990, 52 million cigars were shipped to the United States, accounting for 47 percent of the U.S. premium cigar market. All wrapper leaf was imported but filler was produced in the Cibao valley, where all manufacturers but Consolidated Cigar were located. The five major manufacturers represented contrasting worlds of the corporate, large, and small family firms – Consolidated Cigar, General Cigar, Fuente, MATASA, and Tabacos Dominicanos, where, since 1988, Davidoffs have been made. In 1992, the latter two each employed sixty to seventy rollers making some five million cigars (3.5 million of which were Davidoffs).

Nearly all export quality cigars were made in free-trade zones, which facilitated not only export of the finished cigar but also import and holding of leaf. In 1992, Consolidated employed four hundred workers producing H. Upmann, Henry Clay, Don Diego, Primo del Rey, and Royal Jamaica and had warehouses for twenty-four different tobacco leaves: filler from Brazil, Java, and the Dominican Republic; binder from Indonesia and Mexico; wrapper from Cameroon, Connecticut, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Brazil. In Santiago de Caballero’s free trade zone, General Cigar, in 1992, employing sixty sorters and leaf graders and 120 rollers, had warehouse inventories of leaf, including their famed Connecticut shade wrapper, valued at US\$ 20 million. By spring 1994, Fuente was looking to a breakthrough wrapper from his El Caribe farm.

15. *Cigar Aficionado*, Autumn 1992:65.

CONNECTICUT AND GENERAL CIGAR

In the 1990s, Northern Connecticut produced the U.S. cigar industry's most sought-after, and expensive, wrapper leaf for premium hand-rolled cigars, most of which was shipped down to the Dominican Republic for manufacture. The wrapper was grown in the Connecticut River valley. Tobacco farming in Connecticut dates back to the 1630s, but it was in the 1820s that cigar wrapper tobacco was developed, and by the 1920s, some 15,000 acres were under cultivation. This had dropped back to 1,300 acres in the 1980s, only 200 acres in 1992, with the overall decline in the cigar business, but it then began to creep back up with the cigar revival.

Cullbro Tobacco, a subsidiary of Cullbro Corporation, the parent company of General Cigar, was the leading producer of Connecticut wrapper. The fortunes of Cullbro and the Cullman factory date back to when Joseph Cullmann, the son of a German immigrant, started buying tobacco in Ohio in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1906-7, his son Joseph started to grow Cuban seed, brought from Havana. Connecticut tobacco acreage increased to a peak of 18,000 acres, and, with 1,800 acres of wrapper, Cullbro became one of the world's largest wrapper growers, on a par with American Sumatra. Grandson Edgar Cullman, today chairman of Cullbro, tells how he went to learn all about the cigar business with H. Anton Bock in New York in the 1940s. Moving into cigars, a family consortium bought up General Cigar in 1961 and the Temple Hall factory in Jamaica in 1969.¹⁶ Temple Hall was small but had made Macanudo and Montecristo during World War II, when Havana couldn't meet demand, and made export cigars for British American Tobacco. Their own brands were Temple Hall and Creme de Jamaica. With Connecticut wrapper and filler from Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico, Cullbro launched a high-class advertising push for Macanudo as "the ultimate cigar."

In 1963-64, Ramón Cifuentes, owner of the Partagás brand who had left Cuba for the United States, went to work for General Cigar, as did Benjamín Menéndez and other Cubans. For the first ten years, Cifuentes thought Castro would be ousted and he would get his Havana factory back, but he was gradually becoming disillusioned. In the words of Edgar Cullman:

So, around 1974 I said, what do you think about selling the brand? That's not a bad idea, he said. So we discussed the selling of the brand, and I talked to his uncle, his brothers and his nephews in Spain. Then I had a talk with the people who worked at General Cigar. They said, you can't do that, we are going to do business with Castro tomorrow. We are going to recognize Cuba. And I said, it's not going to happen that fast. I made my bet that we could own the Partagás brand, make it a brand and nothing would happen in Cuba ...

16. For the Cuban tobacco history of Temple Hall, see Stubbs 1995.

The packaging is the same as in Cuba. We marketed it. We spent money advertising it with Ramón Cifuentes in the ads. It started to grow so fast that we had to decide whether we could expand in Jamaica or whether it was wise to have another place to make these cigars. At that point, we had our shade operation in Connecticut and our tobacco-sorting operation in the Dominican Republic. So we spoke to the officials in the Dominican Republic's free zone and they welcomed us.¹⁷

That was in the late 1970s. In February 1981 General Cigars also registered Cohiba and began marketing in a limited way. On this Cullbro was more cautious: "We have no big plans at the moment. We are looking over what we should do. We are very conscious of the fact that should Cuba open, we want to have a position with Cohiba. What that would be we are not sure today."¹⁸

CUBAN AMERICANS HEAD SOUTH

Meanwhile, in southern Miami's Little Havana, a few dozen immigrant Cuban rollers, one-time workers in top Havana factories, made about one million La Gloria Cubana, La Hoja Selecta, El Rico Habano, and Dos Gonzales cigars for Ernesto Carillo's El Crédito factory. Some were as inexpensive as one-third the price of cigars from well-known companies, but they were good, made from a mixture of Connecticut shade and a Sumatra-seed tobacco from Ecuador, with blends from Nicaragua, Brazil, and Mexico. The Carillo family had purchased El Crédito cigars in 1928 in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba, and also owned several Pinar del Río tobacco plantations. The family left for Miami in 1959. In Miami and Tampa, Florida, as well as Union City, New Jersey, freshly rolled Cuban cigars could be picked up for US\$ 1 apiece. They were made in small sweatshops – "*chinchales*" in Spanish, known locally as buckeyes – where production depended on the availability of tobacco, the local smokers' market, and hiring and keeping cigar makers. In Little Havana, Arnaldo Laurencio employed about fifteen rollers making Antelo cigars, while four to six rollers could be found at Orlando Rodríguez's El Canelo.

Tampa, especially around Ybor City, was a cigar-industry ghost town.¹⁹ The few that remained were small, like the Vincent & Tampa Cigar Co. and Rodríguez and Menéndez. Tampa was home in name only to M & N Cigar's Cuesta-Rey brand – it was made exclusively by Tabacalera A. Fuente in the Dominican Republic, as was La Unica, while other M & N cigars were hand rolled at Nestor Placencia's factory in Honduras. M & N's founding Newman family, whose tobacco interests date back one hundred years and who bought

17. *Cigar Aficionado*, Autumn 1994:65-66.

18. *Cigar Aficionado*, Spring 1993:54.

19. For the Cuban tobacco history of Tampa and Ybor City, see Pérez 1978, Westfall 1987, Poyo 1989, and Méndez 1994.

Cuesta-Rey in 1958, struck a 1986 deal with Fuente: the Newmans would manufacture machine-made cigars for Fuente at the Tampa factory, and Fuente would make the hand-rolled Cuesta-Rey for Newman.

New Jersey's cigar community dates back to the 1920s and 1930s when American Tobacco shifted production from Cuba to Trenton and Union City. Decades later, they would relocate back to the Caribbean, but the Cuban community stayed behind making cigars for their own consumption. Small-scale examples were Berto Ale's La Isla and José Suarez's Boquilla. Rolando Reyes's Aliados (former Cuba Aliados of Sancti Spiritus subcontracted to Partagás, Por Larrañaga, El Rey del Mundo, and H. Upmann – Reyes left Cuba in 1968) was larger, with operations in Miami, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras – where tobacco was grown and labor was plentiful. According to the Cigar Association of America, more than forty million Honduran cigars were imported into the United States in 1992, up from 34 million in 1991. That put Honduras in solid second place, behind the Dominican Republic. After the Central American wars in the 1980s, cigar producers of the 1990s pushed ahead from the hot coastal plains of San Pedro Sula to the cool mountains of Santa Rosa de Copán and Danlí in the Nicaraguan border region. Among those who have been called the new tobacco “godfathers” are many Cubans:

Through these men, the shadow of Cuba and its legendary tobacco looms large in Honduras. They stand guard over the process and the tradition of making premium cigars. Antonio “Nico” Fernández (once manager of H. Upmann in Havana) and Nestor Placencia (whose family owned a 200-acre farm in Vuelta Abajo before leaving for Nicaragua) at Tabacos Placencia. Estelo Padrón and Frank Llana at Honduras American Tobacco. Julio Eiroa at Tabacos Rancho Jamaestran. José Quesada at U.S. Tobacco's Danlí operation known as CACSA, or Central American Cigars. Even the Honduran patriarch, Dr. Jorge Bueso, at Tabacos Flor de Copán, remembers Cuban tobacco as the standard, and today he extols the heritage of his Cuban seed leaves. Above all, these men know what they like: They like the cigars they make. They know how to make excellent products year after year. They are men who understand cigars ... “In the cigar industry, if you don't talk Cuban, no one believes you anyway,” says Dr. Bueso...

The Honduras-Cuban connection reads like a spy versus spy novel. Dr. Bueso tells the story of a high-ranking Cuban agricultural official, Jacinto Argudin, who sent a letter to him citing Honduras's history of high-quality tobacco and suggested he ask the new Cuban government for help in setting up a cigar tobacco operation. When no help was forthcoming, Argudin, who had been Dr. Bueso's college roommate at Louisiana State University in 1941, circumvented restrictions on the export of Cuban cigar tobacco seed and sent five pounds of seed through a diplomatic pouch to Honduras. That was the first Cuban seed planted in Central America, according to Dr. Bueso.²⁰

20. *Cigar Aficionado*, Spring 1993:82.

Honduran manufacturers bought wrapper tobacco from the northern Estelí and Jalapa area of Nicaragua, a war-ravaged part during the *contra* war. John Oliva, son of Cuban Angel Oliva, who ran the Oliva Tobacco Company in Danlí, entered into negotiations with the Tabacalera Independiente Nicaraguense S.A. (TAINSA) group, which included three former cooperatives formed under the Sandinista government and the cigar factory in Estelí, to begin farming in the Jalapa region again. But the tensions inevitably remained: the manager of Consolidated Cigar's Tabacos San Andrés factory in Danlí was Indalecio Rodríguez, former director of the *contra* organization, the Nicaraguan Democratic Front. Workers here were newcomers to cigar rolling, often young and women.

The Mexico connection was less developed and less fraught, yet in a not altogether dissimilar vein. San Andrés Valley is the home of Mexico's finest cigar tobacco and cigar exports. While tobacco has Mayan origins, legend has it that today's cigar business has been shaped by three revolutions: the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17 broke up many great cigar estates; the Sukarno takeover in Indonesia in 1949 caused Dutch cigar interests to move to Mexico with Sumatra seed; and the 1959 Cuban Revolution brought the Cubans. In fact, the Cubans in Mexico dated further back than that.²¹ "We learned a lot from the Cubans... A lot of them came to Veracruz and they helped change the way we presented cigars to the world", explained Jorge Ortiz Alvarez.²² Cuban-born Pedro Gómez, production manager of Matacapán Tabacos cigar factory, home of Te Amo cigar, started out as a roller in H. Upmann, in Havana, in the 1930s. He went to Spain, the Canary Islands, Tampa, the Dominican Republic, and finally Mexico: "His ports of call included only places where fine cigars were produced and savored as he worked to become a master in his own right. His passport reads like a guidebook to the history of cigars in the twentieth century."²³

BRAND WARS

In 1994, in Cuba, six key factories produced the quality export cigars: H. Upmann, Partagás, Romeo y Julieta, La Corona, El Laguito and El Rey del Mundo. El Laguito was the exception because it was set up after the Revolution. The other five were the traditional Havana factories of old. In the words of Romeo y Julieta manager José Fabelo:

Here in Havana we make our cigars not only with great skill but also with a lot of love. Other places may be able to make very good cigars, but nowhere has the tradition of Havana. Thus, we have the quality tobacco from Vuelta Abajo, which as a growing area can't be duplicated.²⁴

21. For the broader tobacco history, see González Sierra 1987.

22. *Cigar Aficionado*, Winter 1994:97.

23. *Cigar Aficionado*, Winter 1994:95.

24. *Cigar Aficionado*, Autumn 1994:81.

Each of the five Havana export factories could make four to five million cigars a year, yet in 1994 each was lamenting how production could be increased 50 to 100 percent to meet demand, if only more quality wrapper tobacco could be produced. Meanwhile, retailers round the world were facing supply shortfalls. Simon Chase, marketing director for Hunters & Frankau, declared:

We could have easily sold more than 3,000 boxes of Hoyo Double Coronas last year if we had had them... If everyone had Hoyo Double Coronas, it might be different, but I could pick up the phone today and sell 40,000 of them with very little trouble at all. And that might be to just one person.²⁵

Counterfeiting and brand wars were (and still are) major problems facing the industry of island Cuba, but cigar connoisseurs, especially in Europe, still say a Havana cigar is a Havana cigar, that what makes the difference is the Cuban-grown tobacco. They see the Dominican and other cigars as a different, lesser product, no matter how much the aggressive marketing of major U.S. and Cuban-American cigar companies has been striving to convince otherwise, as in the following *Cigar Aficionado* ads:

“When A Cigar Can Make You Forget Havana, That’s One-Upmanship” (Spring 1993).

“Before 1976, Ramón Allones cigars were made in Havana by Cuba’s most respected cigar-maker. Since 1978, they have been made by the same Cuban cigar-maker in the Dominican Republic [in their rich Cameroon wrapper leaves]” (Spring 1993).

“Guess Who’s Coming To Dinner? El Rey del Mundo, Coming To America In 1994” (Winter 1993/94).

“The Rebirth of A Legend, the new Romeo y Julieta Vintage Cigar: From its Cuban origins in 1875 to its heralded rebirth in the Dominican Republic, the Romeo y Julieta has always been the connoisseur’s choice” (Winter 1993/94).

“Cuba Aliados, Premium Quality Cuban Style Cigars: Rediscover the Art & Mystery of Pre-Embargo Havana” (Spring 1994).

“So good they should be illegal! Casa Blanca (Dominican Republic) Aliados and El Rey del Mundo (Honduras)” (Spring 1994).

25. *Cigar Aficionado*, Autumn 1994:81.

“Ever Wonder What The Great Cuban Cigar Makers Did After Leaving Cuba?” (Summer 1994).

“‘Fidel Castro thought I had left Cuba with only the clothes on my back. But my secrets were locked in my heart.’ Ramón Cifuentes and Partagás. The cigar that knew Cuban when” (Summer 1994).

Cigar Aficionado (Autumn 1992:143) commented:

Americans, of course, are not permitted legal access to the Cuban cigar, so only a percentage of U.S. smokers can decide for themselves which country makes their favorite cigar. But nothing lasts forever. The Cuban trade embargo will fall someday. The debate over where the best cigars are made will only get more intense. Cigar smokers will relish the search.

In Europe, *El Habano* was in business. After Spain and France, key 1992 Cuban cigar export markets were the United Kingdom (5 million), Switzerland (3 million), Belgium (1.2 million), and Germany (1 million). Montecristo was the number one selling cigar brand, accounting for some thirty million cigars, close to half all exports. But, in summer 1993, Tabacalera and Cubatabaco were locked in confidential talks about the future of Montecristo and other brands, including H. Upmann, Partagás, and La Gloria Cubana. In September 1991, Tabacalera had bought the world rights – excluding Cuba, the United States and the Dominican Republic – for US\$ 10 million from Cuban Cigar Brands, a partnership formed by the American tobacco giant Consolidated Cigar and Spain’s Internacional Cifuentes. Court cases in Spain and France subsequently supported Tabacalera’s ownership of the brands over Cuba. High stakes were created in the battle for Montecristo. Spain had the trademarks but didn’t have the cigars. Cuba had the cigars but couldn’t sell them because Spain had the trademarks. In 1993, the Cubans were not easily won over: “We are dealing with the problem at the moment,” maintained [then Cubatabaco director] Francisco Padrón:

Some things are more complicated than they seem ... If we cannot solve our problem with Tabacalera, we are going to launch a new brand name as a substitute for Montecristo. We would then withdraw the brand [Montecristo] from Spain. No problem.²⁶

26. *Cigar Aficionado*, Summer 1993:64.

A year previously, *Cigar Aficionado* had commented:

The big question is when the United States will begin trading with Cuba. Presumably, the big U.S. tobacco companies have their lawsuits ready for the first shipments of Cuban cigars to the States. One company based in New York even has the U.S. trademark for Cuba's most prestigious brand, Cohiba. "It is not that important the U.S. opens," said Cubatabaco's Padrón. "I will not take a single cigar from the European market and sell it to the States if it opens. I want to remain loyal to my customers in Europe."²⁷

Asking a tobacco grower in the Vuelta Abajo about such intricacies of international trade is generally answered by a shrug of the shoulders. Cubans say that in their plantations hatred cannot exist as long as the tobacco grows well. "It is just a pity that Americans cannot smoke Cuban cigars," said Rafael Guerra, assistant manager of El Laguito factory, where the famous Cohiba brand is made. "It is all a question of politics. I really hope that one day it all changes."²⁸

In spring 1994, Padrón declared to *Cigar Aficionado*: "I am not a politician. Things are moving. As José Martí said, 'the most important thing in politics is what you don't see.'"²⁹ In summer 1994, this was followed by an exclusive *Cigar Aficionado* interview with Fidel Castro, who talked about how eight years earlier he had given up smoking as a matter of principle on health grounds but who also extolled the virtues of the Havana cigar.

Over a million Cuban Americans, centered in the key electoral state of Florida and to a lesser extent New Jersey, formed a strong lobby in Washington. Many were diametrically opposed to both Castro and the Revolution – a "no deals with Castro" position. In his 1992 electoral Democrat bid, William Clinton courted the hitherto loyally Republican Cuban American National Foundation lobby, endorsing the Cuban Democracy Act, introducing extraterritoriality into the thirty-year-old U.S. trade embargo on Cuba. This created a foreign policy problem, as it was contested by major trading partners of both the U.S. and Cuba: Canada and Mexico (both in NAFTA) and Spain, France, and the United Kingdom, in the European Union. After the Cuban rafters crisis in the summer of 1994, the heat was on domestically in the United States over the Cuban immigration issue. When in 1996 the Helms-Burton bill, designed to tighten extraterritorial sanctions, became law overseas allies were further antagonized.

By no means all the U.S. and Cuban-American tobacco interests featured here shared the anti-Castro lobby. In the words of Lionel Melendi, manager of New York's De La Concha tobacco store, himself the grandson of a Cuban tobacco grower and cigar manufacturer: "If the embargo were ever lifted, there would be

27. *Cigar Aficionado*, Winter 1992-93:38-9.

28. *Cigar Aficionado*, Winter 1992-93:38-9.

29. *Cigar Aficionado*, Spring 1994:76.

a tremendous demand for Cuban cigars in the U.S. They'd be lined up around the block."³⁰ Cullbro/General Cigar chairman Edgar Cullman adopted a similar line:

I think that the taste of a Cuban cigar is a very rare taste, a beautiful taste, and people who like that taste will do anything to get a Cuban cigar ... such as bring them in illegally and smoke them illegally ... If we ever could find a way to deal with Cuba, it would be a great boon for the cigar business. But I'm not a politician ... There could very well be a revival of the cigar business when people want to taste Cuban tobacco ... I think [the end of the embargo] is going to come, but I don't know when ... The best-case scenario will be: the embargo ends and the American government says that until we can buy enough tobacco to satisfy the American demand by the U.S.-owned manufacturers to make whatever cigars they want with Cuban tobacco, it will hold up allowing Cuban cigars in. That was the understanding we had with the State Department way back in the 1970s when we thought we were going to have some rapprochement.³¹

Clearly, the best scenario for General Cigar would not be the best for Habanos S.A.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF?

Whether Cuba's ongoing reform process is conjunctural or structural – that is, driven by primarily external or internal considerations – has thus far been debated at the macro rather than a micro level, and often solely in the realm of policy. With some notable exceptions, Cuban scholars have tended to lend primacy to the crisis caused by the post-1989 demise of the Eastern European socialist bloc, while foreign scholars have argued the crisis of a whole economic model.

Where agriculture is concerned, the picture is less clear-cut. Key areas highlighted in the early 1990s reforms were the quest for greater food self-sufficiency (Deere 1993; Enriquez 1994; Roca 1994) and ecological agriculture (Levins 1990; Rosset & Benjamin 1992). From research conducted since in Cuba, we now have a clearer understanding of the CPA and UBPC, and issues of local autonomy, participation, land and market reforms.³² Scholars agree that non-state farms are performing better in volume and quality than state farms, and within non-state farms, CCS better than CPA and CPA better than UBPC. This is despite inverse unequal access to factors of production and other resources, with UBPC receiving more state-allocated inputs than CPA and CPA more than CCS.

30. *Cigar Aficionado*, Spring 1993:55.

31. *Cigar Aficionado*, Autumn 1994:69-71.

32. Deere & Meurs 1992; Deere, Meurs & Pérez 1992; Carriazo Moreno 1994; Deere, González & Pérez 1994; Deere et al. 1995; Deere 1995, 1996; Bu Wong 1996; Nova González 1996, 1997; Figueroa 1996, 1998; Pérez-Rojas, González Mastrapa & García Aguiar 1996, 1998a, 1998b; Valdés Paz 1997; Deere et al. 1998; Rodríguez Castellón 1999; Burchardt 2000; Cárdenas Toledo 2000.

Here certain departures come into play on how to interpret this. One study characterizes this as peasantization, depeasantization, repeasantization (Bryceson, Kay & Mooij 1999). Other authors conclude that post-1959 revolutionary policy has been a failure, because it was premised on the state farm as the ideal form of agricultural organization; their corollary argument is that a lessening of state intervention in the agricultural sector could bring about considerable improvements (Puerta & Alvarez 1993, Alvarez & Puerta 1994). In 1991 the CPA was still being described in Cuba as a "superior form of collective production" and the CCS as a "primary organization of a collective nature," backward and slow to adapt to modern technology; and yet the former was being out-performed by the latter. The creation of the UBPC in 1993, Alvarez and Puerta argue, is a massive turnaround in economic thinking and demonstrates that the Cuban leadership has finally come to terms with these realities. It not only denotes recognition of the failure of a policy implemented for more than three decades, it should also induce the leadership to extend the privatization process throughout the economy.

Likewise, certain conclusions have been drawn from foreign agribusiness investment. Thus the 1994 pre-financing agreements with Tabacalera and SEITA, while tying up a large part of Cuba's cigar leaf and cigar exports to Spain and France, are held to go a long way toward explaining the overall increased tobacco output from 25,000 metric tons in 1995 to 33,100 in 1996 and 50,000 in 1997, and the quadrupled manufacture of cigars from 60 million in 1995 to 193 million in 1996 and 250 million in 1997 (Fernández Mayo & Ross 1998).³³

As described in this paper, however, the situation in tobacco is complex and, if anything, demonstrates that no simplistic conclusions can, or should, be reached. This has been corroborated in case studies conducted in Cuba.³⁴ My own earlier studies of the tobacco sector in the 1970s and 1980s (Stubbs 1987, 1991, 1993a, 1993b; Stubbs & Alvarez 1987) homed in on internal factors such as crop specificity in tobacco history, land size, diseconomies of scale, household, and gender. My research in the tobacco areas of Vuelta Abajo and Vuelta Arriba in 1999 pointed to diverse experiences, but to an overall growing awareness of the possibilities and the pitfalls of both internal and overseas markets, as well as individual and collective autonomy, plus a desire to retain perceived social benefits. Concerns were expressed regarding the drive to meet unrealistically high tobacco harvest targets (some even likened this in kind to the 1970 drive for the ten million ton sugar harvest). In Vuelta Abajo, the push to tobacco monoculture was taking its toll on food self-sufficiency and contrasted markedly with the more mixed economy of Vuelta Arriba. One highly successful tobacco from Vuelta Arriba CPA is La Nueva Cuba,

33. It is unfortunate that tobacco was not included in a study of Cuba's current transition and Florida's agricultural economy (Alvarez & Messina 1993; Alvarez 1997; Ross & Fernández Mayo 1997).

34. Donéstevez Sánchez, Fajardo Nápoles & Figueras Matos 1996; Catá Guilarte 1998b; Echevarría León 1998; Pérez Rojas & Echevarría León 1998; Rojas Hernández 1999. New courses have been run to train tobacco agronomists, and new texts brought out: see Instituto de Investigaciones 1998.

in Cabaiguán, which has continued to grow in land area and membership, produces quality tobacco, is food self-sufficient and markets a surplus, and return profits are used for social betterment as well as re-investment in production. Even so, there, as elsewhere, questions are being raised concerning the impact of the 1990s reforms on social equity, household, and gender, all of which remain to be studied.

And yet, the fact is that the strategy of the 1990s agrarian reform dovetailed with the courting of non-U.S. investment, enabled island Cuba to ride an internal tobacco crisis of unprecedented proportions, in the process "turning over a new leaf." Both the output and quality of production and export increased, outstripping fierce overseas brand competition and helping subsidize other sectors of the economy and society. As a result, the "proud cigar band," to borrow the words of Fernando Ortiz (1995),³⁵ helped propel Cuba into the twenty-first century.

35. My research has led me to return to the thinking of Fernando Ortiz and develop a new Cuban counterpoint between the offshore and the island Havana cigar: *Recentering Tobacco in the Contrapunto: Reflections on two 1990s Cuban Revivals* – Fernando Ortiz and the Havana Cigar, forthcoming in: *Proceedings of Cuban Counterpoints: The Fernando Ortiz Symposium on Cuban Culture and History*, City University of New York.

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THE ASHKENAZI JEWS OF CURAÇAO,
A TRADING MINORITY

In the 1920s and early 1930s Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe came to Curaçao. Most of them started their careers as peddlers, but they knew how to get ahead and managed to attain great prosperity within an average of fifteen years. They kept their Jewish identity and formed a close-knit and isolated group. Only their grandchildren were to become integrated into Curaçaoan society. In the 1980s and 1990s the group's size diminished dramatically. Most of the first settlers died of old age and, because of political insecurity and economic decline, many Ashkenazi left the island in the 1980s to settle elsewhere, especially in the United States. In this article I first describe the early Sephardi presence in Curaçao, the arrival of the Ashkenazi in the twentieth century, and the established and the outsiders figuration that developed between these two Jewish groups. I then describe the Ashkenazis' remarkable economic success and the exodus of the 1980s; how far can these be attributed to the characteristics of the group itself and how far can they be explained by conditions and developments taking place within Curaçaoan society?¹

1. In most discussions of Caribbean societies, small white minorities have received little attention. Most authors who deal with Jews have focused on the Sephardi who settled in the Caribbean in the seventeenth and eighteenth century (Oppenheim 1907, Davis 1909, Hilfman 1909, Judah 1909, de Bethencourt 1925, Merrill 1964, Hurwitz & Hurwitz 1965, Schlesinger 1967, Holzberg 1977, 1987, Loker 1980, August 1989, Shilstone 1989, Cohen & Peck 1993). This also holds true for those who have published on Curaçaoan Jewry (Emmanuel 1957, Karner 1969, Maslin 1969, Abraham 1980, Kaplan 1982, Swetschinski 1982, Yerushalmi 1982). Yet the experiences of the Eastern European Ashkenazi who arrived in Curaçao in the twentieth century differ vastly from those of the western Sephardi (who had settled in Western Europe, after they fled from Portugal and Spain). Emmanuel and Emmanuel (1970) have a chapter on the Curaçao Ashkenazi and I wrote an earlier article on them (Abraham 1991). Since then Benjamin's dissertation (1996) on the ethnic identities of Curaçaoan Sephardi and Ashkenazi has contributed to our understanding of both groups. Benjamin's focus is on ethnicity, particularly as it is expressed in religious ritual and organization.

SEPHARDI JEWS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Unlike most Caribbean societies, Curaçao was never a plantation economy. The backbone of the economy was always the international transit trade, which was controlled by Sephardi Jews, originally from Portugal and Spain. These Sephardi had already been on the island since the middle of the seventeenth century. They had developed into a distinguished merchant elite and had the monopoly over the international transit trade and shipping. After 1660 Curaçao, and to a lesser degree Suriname, played an important role in the trade triangle between Europe (mainly Amsterdam), North America, and the Latin American coast. Jonathan Israël (1985:155) writes: "Curaçao was the largest of the Sephardi communities which arose in the West Indies during the second half of the seventeenth century and acted as a hub for the lesser communities on Barbados, Jamaica, Martinique, Tobago, and other islands."

The Jewish merchants were involved in import, export, transit, wholesale and retail trade, in agencies as well as in smuggling. As early as 1721, some of their representatives had written to the authorities in the Netherlands: "It is we who keep business going with our vessels, as among the Christians there are hardly any who engage in shipping; heaven help the land [Curaçao] if we are not here" (Emmanuel 1970: 112).

The commercial sector was highly regarded by one and all. During the second half of the nineteenth century some of the Sephardi were referred to as merchant princes and the Rothschilds of the Caribbean. Trade capital was concentrated in a small number of family businesses. Benjamin Gomez Casseres (1976:134) states: "The type of commerce upon which the island depended promoted an oligarchic organization. Internationally trade was carried out by relatively large, multi-faceted firms, with significant capital endowments and exclusive international ties."

The traditional Sephardi community of Curaçao can be characterized by its large degree of autonomy, its tight internal organization, and strong cohesion. Within the group strong hierarchical relationships, based on income, property, power, and esteem, existed between the different families. Those with the most wealth and status occupied the most important positions in the religious organizations and could exercise a great deal of power over the less wealthy. A marriage was an alliance between two families and endogamy was enforced (Abraham-van der Mark 1993).

In the small island society the Sephardi and the other white elite, the Protestants of Dutch origin, were highly interdependent. Yet social interaction between the two groups was formal and can be characterized by aloofness. They were divided by religion, language, and economic activities. The "higher" stratum of the Protestants were employed in the civil service and colonial administration, and occupied the higher ranks of the military. Throughout the nineteenth

century, a certain competitive rivalry existed between Protestants and Sephardi as they vied for "first place" in Curaçao's rigid social stratification (Karner 1969:32-33).

ASHKENAZI IMMIGRANTS

Most of the Ashkenazi Jews in Curaçao originate from the former Bessarabia, a border area between Romania and Russia, especially from Novoselitsa and Czernowitz in Bukovina, the main market towns for the surrounding rural areas. A few came from Poland. In the twentieth century, Bukovina was part of the Austrian-Hungarian empire, Romania, Germany, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine successively.

These Ashkenazi had been working in trade and as artisans. Among them were watchmakers and goldsmiths, but also people without any means. Very few of them had ever heard of Curaçao. Most of them were on their way to other destinations in Latin America.² The ships on which they traveled made Curaçao a port of call mostly to tank oil, and they often stayed on if they learned that the country of their destination was in political turmoil. Moreover, they understood that there was plenty of opportunity in Curaçao. Some left after a while, but those who remained sent for relatives. To be a "Landsman" (from the same area) was of great importance. A newcomer was helped by the group; he was either hired as an employee or he received credit, and housing was provided.

During the first years the group consisted mainly of young men. There were no potential brides on the island. When one of the men had saved enough money to go back and visit relatives, he would sometimes be given the address of another member of the group in order to deliver presents and good wishes to this "Landman's" relatives. A few marriages resulted from this.

But most of the wives came from Ashkenazi communities in Latin America, such as Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela.

In Novoselitsa, Sol³ started his working career when he was eight years old, piling up fleeces and cutting wood in a small fur factory. When he grew up he set out to join an uncle in Colombia. However, he did not get that far. He arrived in Curaçao in March 1928 and decided to stay. He worked two years for Shell and sent most of the money he earned home, to keep his mother. He met a Landsman who asked him to work in his store, and this man also showed him a photograph of one of his nieces in the old country. She had lost her mother at a very tender

2. From the 1880s onward large numbers of Jews fled Russia, Romania, and other Eastern European countries because of anti-Semitic government policies which were related to an increasing nationalism. Between 1880 and 1933 about four million Eastern European Jews moved westward, primarily to the United States. The Ashkenazi Jews of Curaçao were a later part of this migration. Because the United States had restricted the immigration quotas in 1921, 1925, and 1927, the Ashkenazi aimed for various countries in Latin America (Sachar 1958:240-60 and 314-15).

3. With a few exceptions, names of informants are fictitious.

age. Relatives raised the money for a dowry and a one-way ticket to Curaçao and Sol married her in 1931. The bride's uncle moved on to Brazil. Sol said: "When I still worked for him he kept telling me, time after time: First you marry, then you love."

Herman loved soccer and during the interview he emphasizes that in former Bessarabia he was a well-known goalkeeper. At the age of eighteen he left for Palestine where he worked for two years in a garage. He then set out for Latin America and worked in Peru and Colombia fitting electricity cables. He had an accident and ended up in hospital where he met a young woman who was training to be a nurse. They soon found out that they came from the same area in Eastern Europe. They married and moved to Curaçao where she had relatives.

One trip ended in tragedy. A woman with two small children and a young cousin of hers traveled to Italy by train. In Naples they stayed in an "Immigrant House," an old dilapidated building, waiting for the ship that would bring them to Curaçao. The house collapsed and of the four, only a five-year-old girl survived. Her father came from Curaçao to meet her in Naples but having become a widower he was not able to take care of her and he brought her to her grandmother in Poland. When she was older she joined him. Rosa is now in her seventies but still works full-time in her business. She "hates" the idea of spending her days at home.

In the first years there was still a strong emotional tie with the home countries: Romania, Poland, and Russia. During the 1930s family visits were made and one pregnant woman, ignoring all advice, went "home" to give birth to a son in the village of her parents. However, there were also memories of poverty and anti-semitism. Jacob who had promised his parents to return after one year asked them to relieve him of his promise, because: "Curaçao was a frei land [a free country]." Ruth says "After they introduced a numerus clausus for Jews my father had to leave the gymnasium." Liza remembers:

The cossacks beat my uncle on his head, they beat him severely, and after that he lost his sanity. He would wail and scream, sometimes he got aggressive and had to be locked up in the stable. When he died they took him away on a flat cart, for his funeral. There was such poverty. We ate the same food each day, pickled tomatoes and cabbage and piroggen. My mother was very beautiful and intelligent but, because her parents could not raise a dowry, she had to marry an older man whom nobody wanted to marry.

Isa adds: "Progrms were most often around Christmas and Easter. In some areas people lived in perpetual fear, and then in the 1920s it got worse." During World War II the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe were destroyed and ties with "the old country" were cut off.

FLOURISHING OF THE LOCAL MARKET

The Sephardic trade elite had always concentrated on foreign countries and hardly on the local market. Around the turn of the century many of the Afro-Caribbean people, especially the rural population, lived on the edge of or outside the money economy. The first who established a relationship between town and countryside were the Lebanese and Syrians who traveled around as peddlers shortly after 1900.

As a result of the establishment of the Shell refinery in 1919, the 1920s became the first period of prosperity in the modern history of the island. In 1929 the Central Bank observed "big spending and almost unlimited luxury".⁴ Jaap van Soest (1976:259) writes: "In the 1920s prosperity seemed to spread over the island like an oil slick" and "the flourishing of trade was mainly the result of the increasing purchasing power among the population. Old customers had more to spend than before, and people who used to live outside the money economy now appeared in the stores for the first time." Curaçao's population expanded rapidly, from 35,062 in 1924 to 44,344 in 1929 (Dekker 1982:20), partially because thousands of foreign workers, from Venezuela, Colombia, Suriname, the British West Indies, Madeira, and the Netherlands, came to work at the refinery.

The Ashkenazi Jews took advantage of this favorable situation. It was told that at the age of nineteen, Moshe was already a smart businessman who knew the ropes. He had worked for a firm that traded with the Netherlands and through business connections he first heard of Curaçao. His argument was: "Where oil is there must be money."

Van Soest (1976:260) states that the Jewish peddlers, who allowed people to pay by installments, filled a gap in the market. In the strongly stratified colonial society, where the enormous differences between the socioeconomic strata were directly related to racial characteristics, together with the Syrians and Lebanese they stood between the established merchant elite and the lower strata that in the 1920s acquired some purchasing power. Some of the Ashkenazi were employed by Shell for a couple of years; the majority, however, worked as peddlers from the very beginning. They operated in the town as well as in the countryside and sold clothing, watches and cheap jewelry, a wide variety of household articles, the first record players, and so-called Viennese furniture.

The most recent arrivals carried their wares on their back, those who could afford a few expenses paid a local boy to carry part of the load, and the next step

4. The period from 1922 to 1929 was characterized by rapid economic growth. On the basis of available data from the six local banks Van Soest estimates that the savings balances in those years rose from 5 to 18 million Antillean guilders. "This does not include savings that were transferred outside the island for investment in stocks or to support relatives abroad. This means that the population of the island – Antilleans as well as foreigners – year after year bought more commodities for continuously increasing prices and yet had an average of NAf 2 million per annum left" (Van Soest 1976:272).

up was the purchase of a donkey, with or without a cart. Every peddler had a few hundred customers and of each he kept a card which showed what was bought and what was paid off. When someone sold his circle of customers the debts they owned were totalled and the buyer would pay 50-70 percent of the total amount of the outstanding debts. They called themselves knockers (in Dutch *kloppers*), after the Yiddish word for the knock on the door when they tried to sell their wares or collect money (Pais-Fruchter 1992:8). Frieda tells: "My uncle was one of the first arrivals. He used to tell us how he started off, carrying everything on his back and traveling on foot. It took him three days to walk to Westpunt [the most western part of the island]."

Nathan tells of his first years: "There was fierce competition. We had to sell on a big scale with small profit margins." Dan, who started a shoe store, remembers that most of his store was filled with empty boxes. "That gave the impression that there was a lot of stock. I kept no opening and closing times. The store was always open and I slept on its floor." Leib, who later became one of the biggest merchants, sat near the Emma Bridge with a barrel of pickles. His mother sold homemade, handmade corsets.

The increase of the local purchasing power was first aimed at traditional consumer articles, but later changed to clothing and luxury articles. Because of the establishment of the Shell refinery the Dutch population on the island had drastically increased and this was a group that spent considerable amounts of money. Besides, commerce profited from the continuously increasing traffic in shipping.⁵ Both the number of regular services and the number of tourist ships that came to the island increased.

Taxes were low in Curaçao and the Ashenazi Jews often charged a price that was not directly the total of the real cost and a reasonable profit, but was rather tuned into the considerable purchasing power of the population. In short, the situation was favorable to start or expand commercial ventures. Peddling came to an end very soon. Stores were opened, first small establishments in back streets, but before long bigger ones in main streets, in the very center of town. After 1938 there was only one man who would still peddle every now and then.

Martin tells about his father:

His first shop was opposite the Anna Church, it was a very small shop where he sold all sorts of things, then he opened the next one, the one called Confidential Store, where he sold pots and pans, household goods, cloths, this and that, and then in 1946 he went to the United States for the first time, and after that he sold only "price goods," textiles, materials, nothing else. And in 1957 he opened a bigger business, it was an incorporated company, the bank [Maduro & Curiel's Bank, at that time owned exclusively by a couple of Sephardi families] helped

5. Van Soest (1976:273) writes that the Shell oil refinery resulted in an "enormous" increase of ships calling at Curaçao. In 1922 1,182 steamships put in at the harbor and in 1929 that number was 5,278. In six years the total of visiting ships had increased four and a half times and their tonnage nine times.

him to finance it, and my mother also worked full-time. In those days the men used to meet daily at a Chinese place in the Madurostraat for coffee and a sandwich, that was an important part of their social life. In the 1950s we made money because it became fashionable to have curtains instead of wooden shutters only, and later we sold Venetian blinds. We opened a second shop in the Madurostraat. So we had two shops, one at Punda and one at Otrabanda. In the 1970s one of them was destroyed by a fire but we moved to another street and rebuilt the business. We also sold materials wholesale, to other dealers, and we had a small shop that my father called Debby, after his granddaughter.

Morris started off as a peddler. Before long his wife Marcia and he bought a kiosk, a wooden building, next to the pontoon bridge. They sold lemonade, candy, and chocolate. After that they rented a big house and took in Jewish men as boarders. Marcia cooked meals for the boarders, and take-away meals for others. Morris opened a store and called it La Buenaventura, after the first place where he had gone ashore in Venezuela. He worked from dawn to dusk, and even longer. Twice there was a fire. The couple left for Maracaibo, Venezuela, where he had relatives, but "there was too much violence over there." They returned to Curaçao and became prosperous. Marcia ran her own store. She is proud of having raised a dowry for her sister in Romania.

THE SEPHARDI MERCHANTS LOSE THEIR MONOPOLY

The Sephardi Jews dominated all trade. They had primarily been engaged in large-scale international trade, but in Curaçao wholesale and retail trade had never been separate. However, because of the establishment of groups of foreigners in Curaçao they were forced out of their monopoly. When the Ashkenazi Jews arrived they were free to settle, but soon enough a complaint was voiced in the Chamber of Commerce that they were harming existing trade and that the local population was being exploited by their large profit margins. The Chamber sought to maintain the privileged position of the old established merchant elite and restrict the influence of foreigners. In 1932 the governor of the island also submitted a regulation with "some conditions concerning merchants," that was meant to restrict the Ashkenazi establishing themselves there.

On second thought this was rejected and it was decided not to take measures against the new traders. In Curaçao trade had always been free, plans for government interference were considered utterly radical and opponents put forward the argument that peddlers took great risks when trying to collect the installment payments. The fact that the Ashkenazi did not import their merchandise but bought it wholesale in Curaçao probably played a role in the decision not to tackle them. Thus the wholesale dealers, the Sephardi, suffered little damage from the peddlers. However, these retail dealers did not remain dependent on them for very long. As soon as they had some capital available they started to import goods themselves, from Japan among other countries, and put cheaper products on the

market. The Sephardi bankers gave the Ashkenazi merchants credit. They realized that they were dealing with enterprising, strongly motivated businessmen. Besides, the readiness of the bankers to provide credit was also connected with the cohesion of the Ashkenazi group. They knew that when someone was not able to pay his debts others would act as guarantor for him.

Because of the economic depression of the 1930s, various Sephardi owners of big businesses suffered heavy losses. They had purchased for high prices and now had to sell their goods at a considerable loss. Van Soest (1976:328) explains that the small businessmen who had little or no stock did not have much of a problem in following the price level closely. "Besides, they obtained new merchandise in an extra cheap way by buying goods from estates of their bankrupt colleagues/competitors." With their cheaper (Japanese) products they had an advantage and moreover, they could maintain themselves easier because they had a very simple, frugal lifestyle.

In 1937, after a lot of discussion, a system of entry permits was introduced. From then on, foreigners not only needed a residence permit, but also a special permit to establish a business or to buy an already existing one. The Chamber of Commerce, which looked after the interests of the old Sephardi family firms, had much influence on the permit system and soon pursued a stricter policy. In 1938 the reaction to 65 percent of the requests to start a business was still positive, yet in 1940 65 percent of requests were turned down. The director of Economic Affairs took a much more flexible point of view than the Chamber of Commerce and emphasized that the foreigners would bring a new spirit of enterprise to the island and would contribute to economic diversification. When a number of European Jews tried to flee from fascism at the end of the 1930s and wanted to start up businesses in Curaçao that were attractive to the island, he wrote: "The economic history of The Netherlands proves that the refugees from other countries have contributed considerably to the favorable development of the country" (quoted in Van Soest 1976:381). However, these Jewish refugees were refused entry, no allowances were made for humanitarian reasons.⁶ Van Soest (1976:383) concludes that during the years immediately before and after World War II, the system of admission and establishment permits was enforced in such a way that many chances for renewing and expanding the economy were missed.

The Sephardi wholesale dealers continued to consider themselves the axis around which the island economy revolved and resisted any essential challenge to their position in the center. To maintain the status quo they utilized several economic and noneconomic means. They were a strong political pressure group in the Colonial Council as well as in the legislative council of the island, they continued to keep the Chamber of Commerce closed to outsiders, and they fiercely resisted any infringement on the existing system of exclusive agencies. In this

6. During the War some Ashkenazi Jews from the Netherlands and Germany succeeded in reaching Curaçao via Jamaica and the Dominican Republic, and shortly after the War some relatives of Curaçaoan Ashkenazi who had survived the Holocaust left Eastern Europe to settle on the island.

way they digested the changes in the local market without budging from their nineteenth-century ideal of absolute freedom. Only when the old system was threatened by newcomers – the Ashkenazi Jews and others – did they ask for protective measures by the government (Van Soest 1976:609).

Van Soest (1976:324-40) states that after all, despite a number of bankruptcies, the economic crisis in Curaçao had relatively little effect. Toward the end of the 1930s the economy revived. The wholesale as well as the retail trade took advantage of this. The number of businesses of retail dealers (Lebanese and Syrians, Ashkenazi Jews, and Indians) grew rapidly. The competition between these groups was small because specialization soon appeared. The Ashkenazi traded mainly in textiles and shoes, the Lebanese and Syrians in furniture and provisions, and the Indians had their own assortment of exotic articles. The Ashkenazi were the ones who had the most success and advanced faster than the others.

During the War tourism declined, but Curaçao became an important bunkering-port that delivered large quantities of oil to the allies. Van Soest (1976:396) writes that the oil in Curaçao was always a fraction cheaper than in Trinidad or the Panama Canal and that nowhere in the Caribbean could oil be tanked as fast. Besides, the crews of the many ships did their shopping in Willemstad, the island's capital. Thus the War meant prosperity to the Antilles (Van Soest 1976:469-70) and the interests of Shell, the port, and trade ran parallel to each other.

TWO SEPARATE CONGREGATIONS

Upon their arrival Ashkenazi Jews were allowed to pray in the Snoa,⁷ the Sephardi synagogue, but they were not allowed to join the Sephardi Congregation and some of the men claimed that they were made to feel unwelcome and out of place. In the 1930s, left to themselves, the Ashkenazi rented an upper floor in the former Graham building, next to Cinema Cinelandia, to hold their religious and social gatherings. Martin remembers:

For the High Holidays one had to pay US\$ 2.50 and if you could not pay you were not allowed to enter. Max tried to enter anyhow, but they had a special bouncer, a really tough one, who gave him the bum's rush and that put him down the stairs and outside. And later Max became so rich and even became a freemason! After some years we met at the Penstraat, and then the Bargestraat, and finally we moved to Scharloo.

In a villa at Scharloo, the prestigious neighborhood of the Sephardi with its beautiful architecture, the Ashkenazi not only held their religious services but also

7. The synagogue of Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel, referred to by its members as the Snoa, was consecrated in 1732. It is the oldest synagogue in continuous use in the Americas and replicates various features of the Portuguese synagogue in Amsterdam.

hired a shoeth, a ritual slaughterer. In 1932, they founded a social center (Club Union), and their own sports club. A synagogue did not come until much later, in 1959. It was called Shaare Tsedek, Gates of Justice.

During the first years, when the community consisted mostly of bachelors, it was not easy to keep kosher, and when the women arrived they worked in the shops, just as hard as the men. This contributed to the fact that in the 1970s nobody kept a kosher kitchen anymore, except for some of the older people for the occasion of *Pesach*. The result was friction with teachers and rabbis who felt that they had to lecture the community about the matter. However, their criticism was not received gratefully. The common rationalization was that the conditions on an island such as Curaçao made it impossible to live kosher.

Nowadays people still talk about a gathering in the 1960s sponsored by B'nai Brith (Children of the Covenant, a Jewish civic group) and organized by the liberal Sephardi, where some Ashkenazi gratified their taste for lobster cocktail. On the Sabbath they work in the shops, and in fact this is the day on which most money is made. The result is that sometimes there is no *minyan* in the synagogue, the minimum of ten men needed to hold a religious service. Some people said: "I might close my business on Saturdays, but only if others would do it too. But I am sure that they won't." Some members of Shaare Tsedek call their congregation orthodox while others refer to it as traditional. Allen Benjamin (1996:169-70) concludes that although few members live by the conservative rules "it seems reasonable to describe it as a Conservative congregation – in the mold of the American Jewish Conservative Movement – as well."

In 1964 the Sephardi abandoned the orthodox tradition, and changed to Reconstructionism, a liberal movement in the Jewish religion.⁸ This, of course, increased the religious differences between them and the Ashkenazi. Yet during the 1970s, efforts were made to come to a merger of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi religious congregations (Abraham 1982). Both had only about three hundred members and, through the years, the inequality between the two groups had decreased.

The Ashkenazi had caught up with the Sephardi economically and even surpassed many of them in wealth. The Sephardi population had declined in numbers as well as in power, and the mean age of its members was over fifty. A marriage between a Sephardi woman and an Ashkenazi man took place,⁹ which was seen as a token of rapprochement of the two groups. But the merger was never achieved. During the negotiations old disputes surfaced and the sensitivity of

8. In 1865, after an economic conflict between the most powerful families, a small faction of prominent Sephardi had broken off from Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emanuel to form their own congregation and align themselves with the Jewish Reform movement initiated by Dr Adler in New York City. In the early 1960s both Sephardi congregations suffered from poor synagogue attendance and difficulties in hiring rabbis. Consequently, in 1964, under the powerful leadership of rabbi Maslin, who represented Jewish Reconstructionism, the two congregations merged and became Reconstructionist.

9. Already in the 1950s an Ashkenazi man had married a Sephardi woman. However, the couple left Curaçao to settle in the Netherlands.

both groups became obvious. The Sephardi suffered from the decline of their earlier power and status and the Ashkenazi were dealing with an unfinished emancipation process and had never really come to terms with the negative experiences from the past. It also turned out that the latter group itself was divided. While many members of Shaare Tsedek claimed to be in favor of one synagogue for all Jews, others were against it or simply could not believe that it would ever work. Molka said: "If the two groups could join together they would be much stronger, but it might be like mixing oil and water." Since the 1970s, a growing number of Ashkenazi individually became members of the Sephardi synagogue.

Benjamin (1996:166-78) observes that religious worship in the two synagogues is in various ways dissimilar. He found that, in comparison with the formal, grand character of services in Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emmanuel, the style of worship at Shaare Tsedek is more informal. In the latter congregation each person participates in a more personal manner. For example, one may worship exuberantly, meditatively, or casually, in accordance with individual inclination. This is in contrast to the worship style at Mikvé Israel-Emmanuel, in which much of the ritual is performed by a few who conduct the service, while the congregation participates by listening, observing, and responding in a coordinated manner. Moreover, at the Ashkenazi synagogue virtually all prayers are in Hebrew while at the Snoa English is used most.

In spite of increased cooperation,¹⁰ in Curaçao, unlike elsewhere in the Caribbean, Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews have kept up their separate religious

10. In the mid-1980s the Ashkenazi Congregation sold the synagogue building it had consecrated in 1959 and since then services have been held in a former private home that is close to most members' homes and can be maintained at lower cost. This modest villa does not, however, have enough seats for larger religious celebrations. Moreover, the Ashkenazi did not have a rabbi for some fifteen years. Therefore many Ashkenazi join Congregation Mikvé Israel-Emmanuel one year before their children's bar- or bat mitzvah is to be celebrated (boys at thirteen, and girls at twelve). Then, if the children have attended Hebrew School for the required time, and have prepared for the ceremony, they are entitled to celebrate in the Snoa (Benjamin 1996). Benjamin reports that, in spite of this, attendance at Shaare Tsedek seemed to be growing during the time of his fieldwork (1989 to 1994). This was confirmed in 1998 by Paul Ackerman, who is an active member of both congregations. There is a growing involvement of a young cadre of members, including some recent immigrants from Morocco. Although these Moroccans are Sephardi, they prefer the more traditional Jewish (i.e. religiously observant) services and customs in the Ashkenazi congregation. In 1993 the Ashkenazi hired a rabbi and made even plans to build a new synagogue, according to Benjamin (1996:168) to enhance their autonomy from the Sephardi Congregation. It is true that ambivalent feelings still exist. One of those with a dual membership says that as he regularly attends the Snoa on Sabbath mornings some of his fellow-Ashkenazi like to tease him by asking "Have you been to church yet?" He admits that he always gets irritated, adding "and you know what a church means to us!" The Ashkenazi and Sephardi congregations do cooperate, however. They jointly operate a Hebrew School for children, and people come together at meetings of the WIZO (a women's group to support Israel), the B'nai B'rith, and its youth organization. Moreover, the two congregations celebrate Israel's independence day together. Benjamin (1996:173) observed, however, that the adult groups have few activities and that these are attended sparsely. An important difference between the two congregations

congregations.¹¹ This is remarkable, especially given that both have to face the fact that the number of their members is shrinking and there are no signs that this situation will change in the near future. Frances Karner (1969) estimates that the total number of Sephardi was one thousand in 1894, of a total population of 30,000.¹² In 1968, however, there were only about 300 in a total Curaçaoan population of 167,000. Since the beginning of the twentieth century marriage rates have been low. Many men and women remained single and the majority of those who married chose foreign partners. As family size decreased through birth control and a considerable number of Sephardi moved abroad, several old, established family names became extinct (Karner 1969:73-74). Today the majority of the Sephardi marry non-Jewish partners,¹³ while about 30 percent of the second-generation Ashkenazi (born in the 1960s) have married non-Jewish partners. As a rule the women in those marriages tend to convert to Judaism while the men do not.¹⁴

THE ESTABLISHED AND THE OUTSIDERS

The Ashkenazi knew how to make the best of the chances the Curaçaoan economy offered them. They lived for work and were strongly focused on the future, on the further expanding networks, and finding new trade possibilities. However, socially they kept to themselves and contacts with the Sephardi were limited to economic transactions.

is that since 1994 the Sephardi have counted women in their minyan and are in favor of giving them more tasks in the religious celebrations. In the Ashkenazi congregation, on the other hand, women are excluded from ritual functions (Benjamin 1996:172).

11. The continuity of the two separate congregations was emphasized during the First Conference of Caribbean Jewish communities held in Curaçao in 1974 and was considered a sign of strength by some of the participants. In all other Caribbean societies Sephardi and Ashkenazi fused long ago. Holzberg (1987:36) describes that in Jamaica Ashkenazi ritual was incorporated into the older Sephardi service as part of the terms of the fusion of the congregations in 1921. Moreover, Holzberg (1987:111) calls the Jamaican Jewish group a socially unified cultural segment.

12. Through the centuries the number of Sephardi on Curaçao fluctuated considerably. The studies of Emmanuel and Emmanuel (1970) show how the age of marriage, marriage and birth rates, as well as migration patterns were continuously directly related to economic ups and downs.

13. The most recent wedding in which each spouse had four Curaçaoan Sephardi grandparents was in 1974.

14. In the 1960s, Emmanuel and Emmanuel (1970) reported one hundred Ashkenazi households, and Karner (1969:68) counted 450 persons, adults and children. After the riots of 1969 the group's number had decreased to only 325 in 1974 (Grossman 1977). Today the two Jewish congregations on the island count about two hundred souls each (information from Paul Ackerman), with the Ashkenazi having a younger age structure and more children. In 1999 the total population of Curaçao was about 140,000 (Central Bureau of Statistics, Willemstad).

The Sephardi are aware of the history of their particular community and known kin in Curaçao and they feel pride about the achievements of their ancestors. With their multiple ties of kinship and subsistence which extend back for generations, they have a strong sense of their group as a unique entity. After World War II they had to give up part of their exclusiveness. Endogamy was no longer acceptable and many marriages were contracted with non-Jews, especially with Dutch professionals and naval officers. However, the distance between them and the Ashkenazi remained.

In Curaçao the word "*hudiu*," Jew, had for some centuries been associated with aristocracy, wealth, a refined lifestyle, education, eloquence, and success in business and diplomatic functions. This, however, referred to the Sephardi Jews. The Ashkenazi were called "*polakos*," a denigrating term. For a long time, the image of the *polako* in Curaçao was one of a peddler with all his possessions on his back, someone with strange manners and customs, who spoke an unintelligible language, Yiddish. To the Sephardi the arrival of this very different category of Jews came as a shock; they rejected them and locked them out. To the Ashkenazi this confrontation was traumatic. The fact that both groups were Jewish was not enough to bridge the gap between them. Their relationship had the characteristics of an established-outsiders figuration, such as Elias and Scotson (1976) described on the basis of research in an English working-class neighborhood. In the English figuration the "old," established group rejected newcomers, locked them out, stigmatized them and succeeded in putting a label of inferiority on them. Yet the differences in power and culture between the two groups were slight, while the relation between the Sephardi and the Ashkenazi in Curaçao was characterized by considerable differences in social status as well as culture, language, religious forms, tradition, and history. Thus in Curaçao the contrast between the established and the outsiders was all the stronger. Elias describes how in the English case the established group felt exposed to an attack on three fronts: on their monopolized power resources, on their group charisma, and on their group standards. The Ashkenazi indeed not only attacked the trade monopoly of the Sephardim, but by their very presence they showed that not every Jew was an aristocrat.

The uneven balance of power between the groups showed in the personalities of the group members. The Sephardi clung to the belief of their own superiority. Their relationship with the Ashkenazi was strictly businesslike, and any other social contact (such as eating together, friendship, marriage) was considered out of the question. When the Ashkenazi invited Sephardi to receptions and other social events, only the men turned up. The Ashkenazi suffered under the stigma of social inferiority. Even when they lived in the same neighborhood and sent their children to the same school, no social contact developed. Through favorable conditions and hard work they reached prosperity, but they did not have the possibilities to adopt the sophistication and elegant lifestyle of the Sephardi. They had succeeded materially, but their status in society did not correspond with their economic position. Undoubtedly this status inconsistency contributed to the fact that some of the first settlers and the first generation did not have a very positive self-image.

There was daily business contact with the Afro-Antillean Roman-Catholic population (personnel, customers), but no further social relations developed with this group either. Only one man of the older generation married an Afro-Antillean woman. Suher tells:

We lived in Otrabanda and all the boys in our street went to the meetings of Jonge Wacht [Young Guards, a Roman-Catholic youth organization]. I wanted to join too, I wanted to be like everyone else, and I was told that at Jonge Wacht they had table football, checkers, and all sorts of other games. So I went with the other boys but I had hardly entered or a priest got at me and asked for my name. And as I said "Suher Meit" he yelled at me "out! out! you're not a Catholic!" I have never told my parents about this escapade.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRADING MINORITY

The perspective of literature on trading minorities or middlemen minorities offers a good base for understanding the Ashkenazi's striking economic mobility and their rather isolated position in Curaçaoan society. These studies have mainly been written in the United States¹⁵ and offer insight into the similarities and dissimilarities of the characteristics of "ethnic groups who have relatively large numbers of their members engaged in trade or finance" (Zenner 1980:417). It shows how trade has had an important impact on the culture of these groups and their image in society.¹⁶ Characteristics of trading minorities are multilingualism that goes together with their extensive, usually international, networks, and their relative lack of assimilation into the host society, which is related to the vitality of their own religious, educational, and financial institutions. Exclusive churches, or synagogues, partly explain the aloofness of these groups towards society that has led to the label "persistent minorities." Another characteristic of trading minorities is their usually very limited political participation (Vermeulen 1991:10-11).

Important characteristics which must also be considered as power resources are solidarity and cohesion, which are often strengthened by the hostility of other, older and more established, groups. Internal solidarity may be interpreted by others as cliquishness and intelligence as slyness and such negative interpretations may especially flourish during periods of increasing nationalism among

15. Bonacich 1973, 1974; Stryker 1974, Turner & Bonacich 1980; Zenner 1980, 1988a and 1988b; Light & Bonacich 1988.

16. The presence of trading or middlemen minorities has been particularly noticeable in colonial societies. Such minorities, e.g. Jews, Chinese, Indians, Lebanese, and Greeks, acquired a vital role as middlemen between the local populations and the colonizers. Other concepts that have been used to refer to these groups are pariah capitalists, marginal trading people, trading diasporas and status-gap minorities. Lowenthal (1972) has discussed Jews in the Caribbean as one of various status-gap minorities, who subsisted through trade activities which neither slaves nor plantation owners were in a position to perform. His analysis has been commented upon by, among others, Holzberg (1987) and Benjamin (1996).

the local population. The relevance of the trading minorities' perspective is its focus on the interrelationship between culture and ethnicity on the one hand and socioeconomic processes on the other.¹⁷

In Curaçao the Ashkenazi lived in their own closed community, with their own lifestyle, which was based on Eastern European Jewish traditions, but changed under new conditions and economic prosperity. What remained was a strong work ethos, frugality, strong social control, and mutual support. The Ashkenazi gave each other credit as well as loans and in cases of illness or bankruptcy help was offered. They wanted to keep their Jewish identity and resisted assimilation. Besides, the other Jewish group, the Sephardi, rejected them socially. Thus, until the 1980s there was no progression of integration into Curaçaoan society.

However, the Ashkenazi had a cosmopolitan strain. In Eastern Europe they had lived in border areas, and although Yiddish was the language they used among each other, most of them had spoken four or even more languages during their youth: Romanian, Russian, Hungarian, German, as well as Polish. In Curaçao they learned to speak Papiamentu, English, Spanish, and Dutch. Esther, a woman of the first generation said: "When I am alone with my husband we speak Spanish, because he is from Peru, when the children are present we speak English, with my parents I speak Yiddish, and at work I speak Papiamentu and Dutch."

As soon as it was financially possible the Ashkenazi started to travel frequently, for business as well as family visits. During the 1970s their network included several places in Europe, the United States (especially New York and Miami) and Canada. Besides, there were contacts with Israel, Australia, and several places in Latin America. Saul said: "I have a brother who lives in Russia with his family, another brother is in Miami, two of my daughters live in New York, and then there are the relatives in Israel." Manya added: "I have a lot of kinsmen in the United States and in Israel, several in Russia and Australia, and a brother and sister in Caracas." And Miriam: "I am close to my relatives in Maracaibo, but I am also regularly in touch with those in the United States, in Holland, and in Israel." These quotations have been taken at random but are typical for the whole group. The Ashkenazi never focused exclusively on Curaçao.

In the 1940s and 1950s, all adult Ashkenazi, men and women alike, were occupied in trade. This strong concentration in the retail trade, however, applied especially to the pioneers and the first generation. In the 1960s a couple of sons left the island to study medicine and returned as medical specialists. Today many of the grandchildren still work in business, but just as many have chosen for the professions. The phenomenon that the children and grandchildren of an upwardly mobile trading minority tend to enter the professions is in accordance with the general outcome of research on these groups (Schijf & The 1988).

17. The body of literature on this topic does not form a general theory. Rather it combines a relatively large variety of viewpoints, perceptions, and theoretical traditions. It focuses on economic performance and elaborates on the hostilities from the surrounding groups in society but leaves scope for different theoretical approaches.

The stereotypical images that have circulated have partly been accepted by the Ashkenazi themselves. Several of them explained that to do business one has to be shrewd, which means as much as: to be clever, to be one-up, to always have your eyes wide open, to take advantage of every situation, to see business in everything, and not to be sentimental. It concerns, as they said, qualities that have been transferred from one generation to the next. It was said over and over again that the real businessman enjoys his work. Simon, one of the oldest men said: "I especially used to enjoy unpacking the new stock, and the heart of the matter is that I still love it!"

When asked about the motivation behind their efforts the older generation put forward that it was all for the children. They proved to be preoccupied with finding a successor, preferably a son, perhaps a son-in-law. Women also played an important role. One of them said: "I came back from the United States to continue the business my father built." Yet, not everyone is born for trade. A medical specialist told me: "I wanted to study medicine and my mother supported me but my father was all against it. For him universities represented a different world, business was his life. I was lucky, because my brother-in-law took my place." Ira said that he had never wanted to work in trade, but that he had no choice, he was forced to do it. He wanted to be a musician, and since he retired and moved to New York, he played the violin in amateur orchestras a couple of times a week.

The Ashkenazi have stayed away from the political system in the Dutch Antilles. Though many of them have (financially) supported the National People's Party (NVP), they have never actively participated in politics. Their attitudes were and are conservative. Some tried to convince me that it would have been better if Curaçao had remained a Dutch colony. When asked for his preference for the future political status of the Netherlands Antilles, a jeweler said: "I shall under no circumstances express my political views." This kind of answer was typical for most of the Ashkenazi. They concentrated on their business interests and otherwise remained neutral. In that respect the comparison with another ethnic group, the Lebanese or Syrians, is interesting. This group includes Christians (Maronites) as well as Muslims. Through marriages with Antilleans they have become integrated into the higher middle class of society. Apart from trade, they found employment in various professions, and also as civil servants and politicians. Since the Netherlands Antilles became autonomous in 1954, this group has produced several members of parliament, ministers, and the present governor. To make this possible its members had to integrate fully into Curaçaoan society, and build extensive networks.¹⁸

18. More work is needed to explain the differences in the integration process of the Ashkenazi Jews and that of the Lebanese/Syrians. The latter assimilated much faster despite the fact that many marriage partners were imported directly from Lebanon. My hypothesis is that the Christians (Maronites) in the group did not object to marriage with light-colored Curaçaoan women of the upper-middle class, whether these were Roman Catholic or Protestant. The Muslims on the other hand keep up a mosque and appear to be more eager to maintain a distinct ethnic identity.

The years after the War formed a new period of prosperity. However, the year 1957 was a turning point which meant the start of fast growing structural unemployment. Because of the automation and austerity measures of Shell, workers were laid off on a large scale, first the foreigners, and then the Antilleans as well. But tourism flourished, to the advantage of the retail trade. In particular Venezuelans came to the island and bought large quantities of merchandise which they were able to sell with considerable profit back home. With the increase in tourism, the number of hotels, souvenir shops, boutiques, and restaurants grew. A large population increase led to the construction of several new shopping centers. In short, during the 1960s, many new businesses were opened. The men and women belonging to the first generation that was born in Curaçao were now old enough to run businesses of their own. Economically the Ashkenazi prospered. However, in 1969, riots, brought on by an escalating labor dispute at Shell, erupted and resulted in extensive looting and burning of shops and other buildings.¹⁹ Although the aggression was hardly aimed at the respectable Sephardi group, the shops of certain Ashkenazi who were unpopular were destroyed on purpose. This did not appear to be a matter of anti-Semitism. It was rather a question of pent-up rage against foreigners; these *polakos* had arrived without a penny to their name, but had reached great prosperity in about fifteen years, while the local population had either remained on the same low income level or even had become unemployed since the dismissals at the Shell refinery.

Aggression against trade minorities by the masses occurs all too often, and at least three explanations for this exist. The first one puts emphasis on the development of negative images of the trade minorities (Turner & Bonachich 1980), and their increase when nationalist sentiments flourish (Stryker 1958). Next is the notion of the scapegoat; this is based on the frustration-aggression theory and assumes that the local elite is the real source of the frustration of the masses, but that these aim their aggression at the more visible and vulnerable trade minorities. Finally, Zenner (1980) distinguishes the "grain of truth" explanation, which states that the members of a trade minority have more intensive contacts with the masses than the elite, but that their interests are tied to those of the ruling class, and that they sometimes act as representatives of an exploitative system.

The riots were a turning point in the history of Curaçao and coincided with the development of a new sense of self-awareness and assertiveness of the Afro-Antillean population. On cars stickers appeared with texts such as "Curaçao is ours" and "I am black and I am proud of it." The existing white bias, characteristic of a racially segmented society with a colonial history, which encouraged the view that white skin color was advantageous and provided definite privileges, began to crumble.

The aggression of the masses was primarily aimed at the multinational Shell. However, behind this aggression were strong feelings against the very uneven distribution of power resources in the postcolonial society. The Ashkenazi had

19. See Oostindie (1999a and 1999b) about the general strike and the riots that went with it.

never had any political power and it was inaccurate to hold them responsible for Curaçao's rigid stratification system, but their very visibility made them vulnerable. Thus they can be regarded as scapegoats.

The "grain of truth" explanation also offers a starting-point. The Ashkenazi had daily intensive contact with the Afro-Antillean population. Both their personnel and their clients knew about the high profits, and the way of dealing with employees was paternalistic rather than progressive. Some employees felt exploited and it was no secret that many Ashkenazi disliked labor unions. They aimed at maintaining the status quo and, being very successful, they cherished a positive image of the possibilities of upward mobility in Curaçao. They never realized that the masses had a less favorable image of society.

After they recovered from the shock of what some refer to as "the revolution," the Ashkenazi continued to expand their economic base. In 1977 the group consisted of 86 heads of households who owned 144 businesses.²⁰ Thirty-nine of those had been established before 1950, 56 were founded in the 1960s, and the others (49) in the 1970s. The group was first in the retail trade (especially clothing, shoes, accessories) with 136 stores, followed by the Lebanese or Syrians, who had 77 stores. Five Ashkenazi had succeeded to establish themselves in the wholesale trade, and three men had become medical specialists. The group was now well represented in the Chamber of Commerce and in other commercial organizations.

A classification of invested capital showed that the Ashkenazi had caught up with the Sephardi. Both groups shared second place behind the Dutch (Shell and some other big companies). The Lebanese and Syrians took fourth place, behind the Portuguese. A count of businesses conducted by the Department of Labor in 1977, showed that the different ethnic groups on the island (Jews, Lebanese and Syrians, Portuguese, Chinese, Indians, Venezuelans, Surinamese, and others) were highly specialized economically. It also showed that the participation of the Afro-Antillean population in this sector of the economy was quite poor.

It was evident from conversations that were carried on toward the end of the 1970s, that some of the Ashkenazi no longer felt safe on the island. The wave of "Antilleanization" and the debate over the possibility of a new political status of the islands, independent from the Netherlands, were perceived as very threatening. Many left for the United States (especially in or around New York and Miami), Canada, and Israel. The United States, by some of the older men referred to as a *goldene medinah* (a golden land), had always been attractive to them. Moreover, ties had been formed with Israel. Many of the families had relatives or other connections in that country and several of them sent an adolescent son or daughter there for a year. Some Ashkenazi married Israelis, and when the couples returned to Curaçao, either a position was found in an existing store for the Israeli partner or a new store was established. A couple of businesses were set up in Israel also.

20. Data from the Department of Labor, Willemstad, Curaçao.

Because the young people had to go abroad for their education, and the marriage market had always been primarily outside the island, the composition of the group changed. Some left to settle abroad and married there, those who remained in Curaçao imported partners from various Latin American countries and, after 1970, also from Israel and the United States. The newcomers had little in common with the older generation that had grown up in Eastern Europe, and they formed their own social circle. Some of the elderly complained about being lonely.

As the group became more heterogeneous, its cohesion decreased. Increasing individualism conflicted with the strong social control within families and within the group. Hierarchical relations in some of the older businesses where family members were subject to the authority of a patriarch or older brother also led to tensions. Sometimes business interests and family ties came into conflict and disputes arose over the distribution of profits and losses.

The group's mentality changed. The older people had never known leisure. They worked long hours in the store all week, also during the Sabbath, and spent Sundays doing administrative work. Their adult children complained about it. Martin said: "My parents cannot stand being at home. When facing a long weekend they get nervous and irritable. They never knew leisure. We are different, on Sundays we go swimming with the kids and invite friends for a barbecue." One Sunday morning one of the biggest merchants died from a heart attack in front of his store, just having spent several hours on book-keeping. He was a symbol of the old mentality.

A dramatic example of rise and fall is the story of a great jeweler's. Watchmaker Isaac worked his way up fast and made Haime a partner. Haime had started out as a peddler, selling watches, cheap jewelry, and devotional pictures. He was conspicuously successful and intelligent. Moreover, he married Isaac's daughter. The business was flourishing, and when Haime died, in the late 1970s, he left thirty-one stores with five hundred employees. Some of the elderly in the group said: "He has built an empire, but what is to become of it? He has no son to follow in his footsteps." In 1989 the firm filed for bankruptcy. The enterprise had always been managed by one brilliant businessman, but after a great flourishing period insufficient adjustments were made to changed conditions, such as the economic recession and the decline of tourism. The business had been expanded with too many stores that turned out to be unprofitable. When Haime became too old to manage the company, nobody took over. However, a thorough reorganization was necessary. His daughter, who came from the United States to take her father's place, was not able to save the business. This tragedy was one of many. In at least fourteen other cases it turned out that the heirs could not keep the business going after the founder had died and had to put it up for sale or file for bankruptcy.

Toward the end of the 1970s the general economic regression was felt strongly. In 1983 the bolivar devaluated and caused the Venezuelan shoppers, upon whom many businesses depended, to stay away. Shell kept reducing its staff more and more, until it closed its doors in 1985. It was taken over by a Venezuelan company, but that operated on a much smaller scale. There was an apocalyptic atmos-

phere on the island and, during the 1980s, many stores that belonged to Ashkenazi Jews were either closed or sold to Indians. The second generation born on the island went to study in the United States. Many of them did not return and in the same decade the older generation decreased through death. The Ashkenazi's place was taken over by a fast-growing ethnic group, the Indians. They succeeded in obtaining a monopoly of a new category of products: electronics. Their success in the 1980s, a time of economic decline and an atmosphere of depression, is remarkable. Nathan said: "The old downtown is no longer New Jerusalem, it has become New Bombay."

CONCLUSION

In the 1970s social contact between Ashkenazi and Sephardi was still minimal. Differences in social status and culture were far too large for social intimacy. But when the grandchildren of the pioneers grew up, social relationships with the Sephardi as well as with other groups in society developed. Today the established-outsiders figuration belongs to the past. This has meant integration as well as assimilation. Some members of the two groups entertain each other and at least three couples currently living in Curaçao include an Ashkenazi and a Sephardi spouse (Benjamin 1996:172-73). Yet, Ashkenazi and Sephardi have kept up separate religious congregations, and moreover, have remained two distinct ethnic groups.

Benjamin (1996:60-78) gives a good description of the various dissimilarities between the two Jewish groups at the end of the twentieth century. Ashkenazi feel that their identity is as Jews who happen to live in Curaçao, and they maintain strong ties with Israel. The majority of them marry Jews while the Sephardi tend to marry non-Jews. The languages they speak at home are generally English, Yiddish, and Spanish. The Sephardi, on the other hand, usually speak Papiamentu among themselves. In this and other practices they conform more closely with the practices of non-Jewish Curaçaoans.²¹ Benjamin observes also, rather surprised, that Curaçaoan Sephardi buy Christmas trees and consider them as pretty objects or symbols of "universal good will," while in Ashkenazi homes a Christmas tree would be anathema, a symbol of one's persecutors. One of Benjamin's Ashkenazi informants said: "They [the Sephardi] don't feel the *yiddishkeit* of the Ashkenazi." Thus, generally speaking, the Ashkenazi identify themselves more as Jews than as Curaçaoans while Sephardi feel that they are Curaçaoan first and Jewish second.

Today Curaçaoan Sephardi are still referred to in Papiamentu as *hudiu* (Jews) and Ashkenazi as *polako* (Poles). They are recognized as distinct groups, both

21. The Sephardi eat creole food, employ herbal remedies and protect themselves from evil in more or less the same way as non-Jews in Curaçao do, such as by cleaning the house thoroughly on December 31 with *awa di siete*, a mixture of seven different fluids, and *sensia*, a mixture of seven kinds of incense (Benjamin 1996:174).

among Jews and among many non-Jews, though there is no rigid boundary between the two. Curaçao is exceptional, because the differences in social status and culture between *hudiu* and *polako* are significant enough to be recognized by non-Jewish Curaçaoans (Benjamin 1996:160).

The striking upward mobility of the Ashkenazi Jews in Curaçao can be attributed in large part to their making the best of the very expansive economy during the crucial period after their arrival. Because of the huge social distance between the elite and the lower social strata and because the established businessmen had neglected the local market, a gap in the market arose when the local purchasing power increased. The Ashkenazi knew how to make use of this, thanks to their cultural background and work ethic. In Eastern Europe they had already worked in trade and crafts, and, moreover, they had good trade networks and knew how to expand these continuously. Because they came from border regions they spoke several languages and after their migration they easily learnt to speak four others. Moreover, from the beginning, the Sephardi provided credit. The ties of the Ashkenazi with Curaçao were primarily economic. When the economy declined drastically during the 1980s, many of the Ashkenazi moved away. There was never any question of aiming for their goals only in Curaçao.

In his analysis of the differences of acculturation between the Chinese of Jamaica and those of Guyana, Orlando Patterson quotes Engels (1970:487): "We make our history ourselves, but, in the first place under very definite assumptions and conditions. Among these, the economic ones are ultimately decisive." Patterson (1975:344) also observes that of all economic occupations the retail business especially allows a group of immigrants to keep its own culture and to combine maximum financial profits with minimal acculturation. The Ashkenazi of Curaçao appear to illustrate this. Yet an exclusively economic perspective cannot explain why the Ashkenazi continue to make considerable sacrifices to maintain their distinct religious congregation and keep their particular type of "Jewish" identity. Manya said:

I was born in Czernowitz, which was once a center of Jewish culture and today it is a lost world, that way of life has been destroyed, but here we are, we have survived, and we and our children and grandchildren will live on, here or somewhere else. Our story is far from done.

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DAVID J. CARROLL

STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS:
U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS AND THE EMBARGO

Cuba: Confronting the U.S. Embargo. PETER SCHWAB. New York: St. Martin's, 1999. xiii + 226 pp. (Cloth US\$ 29.95)

Presidential Decision Making Adrift: The Carter Administration and the Mariel Boatlift. DAVID W. ENGSTROM. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. x + 239 pp. (Paper US\$ 25.95)

Fleeing Castro: Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children's Program. VICTOR ANDRES TRIAY. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998. xiv + 126 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95, Paper US\$ 14.95)

Some forty years after it was first imposed in 1960 in the midst of the cold war, the U.S. embargo against Cuba remains the defining feature of U.S.-Cuban relations. Like the Berlin Wall, the embargo is both a symbolic and a physical barrier keeping apart two neighbors destined to move closer. Unlike the Berlin Wall which fell at the end of the cold war, the U.S. embargo against Cuba still stands.

Several factors serve to explain the embargo and the confusing "logic" of U.S. policy toward Cuba. First, because of its proximity, Cuba, along with Mexico and Caribbean Basin states, has traditionally been a country of acute interest for the United States. Second, U.S. feelings toward Cuba are especially sensitive because of the nature and timing of the Cuban Revolution, which brought to power a charismatic socialist leader who was determined to limit U.S. influence, and who became closely allied with the Soviet Union. A third key factor in the equation is the rise of the political influence of the anti-Castro Cubans who have come to the United States over the last forty years.

Each of the books under review focuses on aspects of U.S.-Cuban relations. By far the most encompassing of the three is Peter Schwab's *Cuba: Confronting the U.S. Embargo*, which traces the evolution of the Cuban Revolution and U.S.-Cuban relations, and explores the motives and impact of the U.S. embargo.

Schwab is scathing but generally on target in his critique of U.S. policy and the embargo, arguing that the basic motivating force behind U.S. hostility toward Cuba is an unwillingness to tolerate in its backyard an independent state that resists control. The fact that the embargo survives beyond the cold war indicates the broader bases underlying the conflict with Cuba. Instead of easing restrictions after the 1991 cut-off of Soviet aid to Cuba, the embargo was tightened via the 1992 Cuba Democracy Act (CDA) and the 1996 Helms-Burton Law, ratcheting up pressure on the Castro regime.

When it was first initiated in 1960 the embargo only prohibited U.S. exports. In 1962, as relations continued to deteriorate, President Kennedy imposed a total embargo on imports and exports, but allowed an exception for medical supplies. Licensing requirements added in 1964, however, made it extremely difficult for food and medicine to reach Cuba.

Since the 1960s, with the lone exception of President Carter, no U.S. administration has made serious attempts to improve relations. The Carter administration came to office assuming the cold war was over and quickly made efforts to end the embargo of food and medicine and to start negotiations to normalize relations. But these came to a halt as the cold war resumed and Cuba supported pro-Soviet states in Africa. Relations remained sour during the 1980s, with leftist governments in power in Nicaragua and Grenada. The Reagan administration increased U.S. military involvement throughout the Caribbean region, and launched the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) offering aid to anti-communist governments.

With the end of the cold war in 1989-91, a debate opened about whether to move toward normalization. The influence of Cuban-Americans, long a key force promoting a hard-line toward the island, played a large role and fueled an effort to tighten the embargo and force Castro from power. The 1992 CDA prohibited U.S. overseas subsidiaries from trading with Cuba and closed access to U.S. ports for 180 days for vessels carrying subsidiary-traded goods to or from Cuba.

The embargo was further tightened in 1996 with the passage of the so-called Helms-Burton Law, which extends the embargo to third-country trade. The law also gives U.S. citizens and Cuban exiles the right to sue non-American companies benefiting from confiscated U.S. property, and permits the United States to deny visas to foreigners investing in such properties. Perhaps most importantly, the law makes normalization and an end of the embargo contingent on democratization in Cuba, defined to exclude Fidel or Raúl Castro from leadership roles.

Schwab argues that in spite of the embargo's vigor, it is destined to fail in terms of its primary purpose of forcing Castro from power. Castro is firmly entrenched, has complete control over the military, and has the support of a sizeable proportion of the population. If anything, Schwab contends, the embargo provides a useful scapegoat for Cuba's problems.

Nonetheless, Schwab believes that the embargo has in fact taken a high toll on the Cuban people, especially in terms of its impact on the cost and availability of food and medical supplies. The new restrictions on U.S. subsidiaries have been particularly detrimental, as roughly 70 percent of trade with U.S. sub-

sidaries was in food or medicines. The restrictions mean that Cuba is unable to import many of the newest drugs developed by U.S. pharmaceuticals. Citing such effects, Schwab argues firmly that the embargo violates the human rights of Cuba's citizens.

While condemning U.S. policy, Schwab praises Castro and the achievements of the Revolution, especially in public health. In spite of the embargo, Cuba has succeeded in maintaining a system of universal health care, trained thousands of physicians and nurses, and established a network of pharmaceutical and biotechnology research facilities. Because of this unbending commitment to improve the lot of the poorest, Schwab concludes that history will vindicate Castro and his struggle.

Schwab also provides a useful overview of Cuban dissident groups in the United States and Cuba, ranging from the rabidly anti-Castro Cuban American National Foundation to several moderate groups in Miami, and political dissidents in Cuba. He finds fault with the severe lack of political freedom in Cuba, and notes that dissidents are routinely imprisoned (but not killed or "disappeared") for attempting to create political parties, or report on human rights conditions. While arguing that these limits are unnecessary and in the long run counter-productive, Schwab seems to find them acceptable in the context of Cuba's "social contract" which puts the collective interests of economic and social rights above individual political rights.

In looking at possible post-Castro scenarios, Schwab sees Raúl Castro together with several of Cuba's emerging reformists leaders (e.g., Ricardo Alarcón and Carlos Lagos) as most likely to succeed Castro. He believes that Cuba's future leaders will follow China's model of keeping political reform on a slow track while continuing the economic reforms instituted in recent years. In spite of these changes, he argues that the lasting legacy of Castro and the Revolution will be a Cuba that continues to resist U.S. economic domination and that insists on more equal footing in U.S.-Cuban relations. While Schwab's view makes sense for the immediate post-Castro period, it seems less likely to hold over the long-term when U.S. influence will be hard to contain.

Focused more narrowly on U.S. policies during the 1980 Mariel Crisis, David Engstrom's *Presidential Decision Making Adrift* argues that the Carter administration badly mishandled the crisis. Lasting from late April until September 1980, the problem centered on some 125,000 Cuban refugees who fled Cuba, mostly in small crafts dispatched by Cuban-Americans in South Florida. Although only a few criminals and mentally ill persons were among the *Marielitos*, their presence played an important role in public perceptions and complicated policy solutions. Almost immediately after it erupted, the Mariel Crisis was viewed as a significant embarrassment for the administration.

According to Engstrom, administration officials were distracted by other issues – most importantly the ongoing hostage situation in Iran and the planned rescue mission – and failed to pay attention to warning signals that a crisis was looming. These included several unambiguous statements from the Cuban government, and Castro himself, threatening to unleash a wave of refugees. Engstrom believes that part of the problem was the administration's decision-making struc-

ture, which split responsibility between domestic and foreign policy advisors and failed to provide a central authority.

More importantly, Engstrom proposes that Carter administration officials displayed an amazing lack of historical knowledge about Cuban migration and the underlying social and economic dynamics. In particular, he cites the failure to learn lessons from the 1965 Camarioca boatlift, in which Johnson administration officials were able to use the outflow of refugees to embarrass Castro and to move toward a negotiated agreement for orderly departure of refugees via regular airlift in the so-called "Freedom Flights."

After 1973, when the Cuban government unilaterally ended the flights, immigration from Cuba slowed to a trickle. At the same time, pressure to leave the island rose due to Cuba's failing economy, expanded links with visiting Cuban-American relatives, and growing internal dissent. As a result, boat hijackings in Cuba increased, as did other forcible attempts to flee to the United States where standing policy was to welcome all Cubans who reached U.S. shores. Cuba viewed U.S. policy as an encouragement of illegal departures and an attempt to embarrass the Cuban government. By 1979-80, the Cuban government began sending signals that it wanted the United States to detain and deport hijackers, and to open talks about immigration issues.

Despite Cuban government interest in talks, the United States ignored the problem. This was due both to the swirl of crises hitting the administration and to the resurgence of the cold war following the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Cuba's involvement in Africa. These concerns were magnified by the domestic politics of a re-election campaign and the need to counter charges of being soft on communism. Not surprisingly, the administration adopted a hard-line toward Cuba and abandoned attempts to improve relations.

Engstrom argues that, once hit with the Mariel Crisis, Carter administration officials bungled it by initially using only weak legal threats to dissuade Cuban-Americans from sending boats to Mariel Harbor to retrieve refugees. What was missing in the critical early weeks of the crisis – and what Engstrom argues should have been learned from Camarioca – was a clear effort to establish an orderly departure program so that Cubans on both sides of the straits knew that a realistic alternative was forthcoming. Only belatedly did the administration start negotiations and begin to seize boats carrying illegal aliens. According to Engstrom, the administration also mishandled the domestic resettlement politics of the crisis, moving slowly to fashion special refugee legislation and putting too much of the resettlement costs on the states which viewed it as federal government responsibility.

Engstrom anchors his argument in a thorough analysis of contextual issues, including U.S. immigration and refugee policy; arcane issues of immigrant legal status, and broader issues of U.S.-Cuban relations. He draws on numerous interviews of key policy makers and scores of original documents, and provides useful comparative information about similar crises, including the 1965 Camarioca boatlift and the 1995 Mariel II Crisis. (The latter was followed by negotiations

which ended the U.S. policy of welcoming Cuban refugees, and led to an agreement to allow 20,000 legal immigrants per year.)

As a historical critique of the Mariel crisis, it is hard to disagree with Engstrom's conclusions about the mistakes of Carter administration officials, in particular their failure to heed early warnings and to move quickly to negotiate an agreement. At the same time, Engstrom's analysis also brings to light extraneous factors which severely constrained the administration's ability to move in these directions, including its preoccupation with the hostage crisis, the resurgence of the cold war, and election year political considerations.

Finally, in *Fleeing Castro: Operation Pedro Pan*, Victor Triay tells the story of 14,000 middle-class Cuban children who were smuggled to the United States between 1960 and 1962 because their parents were unable or unwilling to leave Cuba. For the most part, the parents either belonged to the anti-Castro underground working against the government or had business or family interests that led them to stay. Many were Catholics strongly opposed to the ideological indoctrination of state schools and communist youth organizations which children had to attend.

Triay's book provides useful insights into the perspective of white anti-Castro middle-class Cubans and shows the physical and emotional losses they endured. While clearly opposed to Castro, Triay is not unaware of the self-interested motives of both Cuba and the United States in supporting the flight of Cuban children. For Cuba, the departure of domestic opponents made the consolidation of the Revolution easier. For the United States, the program grew out of its support to Cuban underground operatives concerned about the safety of their children. While Triay's story of the refugee program and the leading characters behind it is worth pulling together, the book will mainly be of interest to specialists on Cuban refugees.

What connects these three books is the window each provides into the often-times bizarre nature of U.S. policy toward a close neighbor. While it seems obvious that relations should be improved, the weight of historical forces in the opposite direction is hard to overcome. Now in its final year with a lame duck president, the Clinton administration is making moves that suggest a possible warming in relations. However, as evidenced by recent controversies surrounding a six-year-old refugee whose mother died at sea while fleeing to the United States, debates about Cuba remain a flashpoint in U.S. politics and can easily swallow up any attempt to improve relations.

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THE SEARCH FOR HISTORY IN THE NATIVE CARIBBEAN AND
SOUTH AMERICA

Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650. NOBLE D. COOK. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 248 pp. (Cloth US\$ 54.95, Paper US\$ 15.95)

An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians. FRAY RAMÓN PANÉ. Edited by José J. Arrom, translated by Susan C. Griswold. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999. 72 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95, Paper US\$ 12.95)

Some Recoveries in Guiana Indian Ethnohistory. GERRIT BOS. Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1998. 361 pp. (Paper NLG 85.00)

Each of these three volumes reflects a particular approach to the history of the Native Caribbean and South America, but despite their distinct methodologies and approaches they share a rather restricted view of the historiographical possibilities for knowing that past. None makes use of native testimony, nor do they consider ethnographic materials on native historicity. As such they represent a style of historiographical reasoning that has largely been supplanted by a broad range of archaeological, textual, and ethnographic works which seek to properly integrate these kinds of materials to reveal not just a history of others but others' histories.

In Cook's *Born to Die* we find a well-organized and clearly written summary of the major documentary evidence of the impact of epidemic disease on native demography in those areas of initial contact between European and indigenous Americans. However, such materials should already be reasonably familiar to both scholars and a wider audience not only through the publications of Cook himself, but also through those of Alfred Crosby, John Hemming, and Linda Newson. This is not to suggest that such a re-telling might not be useful for pedagogical purposes, but it is evident that no new theoretical or empirical departures are to be expected. Rather, this volume reads as a fine summary of the work of a number of scholars committed to demonstrating the significance of epidemics in enabling the colonization of South America and the Caribbean.

However, in a wider context of contemplating the construction of indigenous history, the "disease" model has some drawbacks. For example, it can all too easily appear as if the only determining fact of the colonial encounter was the demographic impact it had on native populations. Certainly no one would want to minimize the disastrous consequences of the spread of infectious disease on those populations, but the effect of Cook's presentation is to make it appear as if this was the only factor at play. It is notable, for example, that he does not consider the possibility of migration away from the centers of initial contact as a factor in the reports of population decline in a given locale.

In a similar vein to the recent best-seller by Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, the very title of the work, *Born to Die*, implies an anti-historical inevitability to the fate of native populations that functions to ethically absolve the process of colonial occupation. Although Cook in no way minimizes the brutalities of colonial invasion and occupation, this is not the same as uncovering the copious evidence of native agency and response to such crises. In addition there is a marked tendency to project the often uncertain data on disease from one region into others, as in the discussion of the Venezuelan littoral (p. 50). Certainly there is no reason to suppose that there was no effect from epidemics but, as always with this notion of "history as higher-mathematics," to use David Henige's phrase, such speculation is apt to become accepted as proven through a constant repetition, not the evidence of historical sources. Disease was a constant aspect of native and colonial interactions and the effects of such diseases on the concentrated populations of the Caribbean islands, coastal Brazil and the Andes was significant. Missionary evangelism beginning in earnest in the latter part of the sixteenth century only served to enhance this effect through the conscious policy of re-settling native converts into missionary settlements. However, this represents only a partial historical understanding. Cook and others have played a major role in ensuring our awareness of the significance of disease in native and colonial history, but this is not in itself to have understood that history. Indeed Cook's account is otherwise steeped in rather suspect ethnology, especially with regard to the Caribbean, where once again (p. 20) he raises the specter of "cannibalistic Caribs" and "docile Taino (Arawaks)." This is justified by reliance on the report of de Cuneo from Columbus's second voyage which for Cook unaccountably "elicits a greater level of confidence than most." Such reports, though never achieving the subsequent notoriety of Pané's *Account* (discussed below), attempted to define and locate political authority, cultural proclivity, and military ability, as a prelude to the conquest and enslavement of *caribe* populations, not as some dispassionate ethnological exercise. Cuneo portrays the Caribbean as riven by a fundamental cultural dualism in which the cannibalistic and warlike *caribe* Indians threaten to overwhelm Spain's natural allies, the *aruaca* or *guatiao* Indians. This portrayal then both licenses the legal enslavement of vast numbers of native peoples and allows the Spanish Crown to evade moral responsibility for the destruction of Hispaniola by allusion to the depredations of the *caribe*.

An inability to critically read the wider ethnological information thus elicits uncertainty as to the use of documentary materials more generally by Cook and other historical demographers. Given also the tenuous line of inference that underpins most assessments of epidemic disease and population numbers in the Americas, as Cook certainly acknowledges (p. 19), it is likely that more precise or accurate understanding of disease demography is actually unachievable.

Ramón Pané's *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians* was commissioned by Christopher Columbus in 1493, and despite its brevity is of singular significance to historians and anthropologists of the Caribbean. This is not just because of the descriptions it gives of the natives of Hispaniola, but also for the way in which its many linguistic and textual transformations through the centuries have made it a continuing vehicle for historiographical and anthropological debate.

In one sense it is not difficult to see why this should be so, for the *Account* itself is actually rather confusing if not incoherent, unfinished, and often enigmatic in its choice of ethnographic subject matter. Nonetheless, it remains the first and only extended account of the myth, ritual, and cosmology of the native people on Hispaniola. Moreover, as the *Account* was personally commissioned by Christopher Columbus it is also infused with the aura of that name. This close association of the *Account* with the tribulations of the Columbus family is also pertinent to understanding the form in which the *Account* is presented here, since the text survived only in Italian translation, having been hastily incorporated wholesale into the biographical apology for his father that Ferdinand Columbus produced as part of his legal efforts to regain family possession and titles on the island.

However, despite the uniqueness of the *Account* as a document of initial contact with the indigenous population, the fact that the native population of Hispaniola had all but disappeared by the 1530s meant the *Account* was in its own time a historical record of vanished native cultures. These aspects of Pané's *Account* also speak to us in a very contemporary way for they highlight the connections between the anthropological gaze and colonial desire, between the professional practice of anthropology and its cultural meaning. The need for an ethnography of Hispaniola stemmed not from an abstract interest in human variety but a pragmatic interest in the control and conversion of the native population and it is for this reason that Pané presumably focuses as much as he does on the cosmological and ritual practices of the Hispaniolan elite.

However, the nature of indigenous culture and society in 1492 has remained a matter of dispute among historians and anthropologists. In particular there is profound disagreement on such issues as the very existence of a discrete "taíno" culture, the identity of the *caribe*, and the nature of their cultural and social integration with the peoples of Hispaniola, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Thus it must be noted that the term "taíno" is a purely nineteenth-century invention by the antiquarian C.S. Rafinesque. It derives from the phrase, recorded in the contemporary documentation, *ní-taino*, meaning "my-lord." There is no evidence that this phrase was ever used by native people to designate their own ethnic identity or

that of others. In fact it was the term *guatiao* that was used to generically indicate “allies” or “friends” and which appears in the contemporary Spanish records.

Arrom is no stranger to these controversies and he has chosen a path through them that is reflected in his introduction and annotation of Pané’s *Account*. This is not the first time that the *Account* has been translated into English, or presented along with the redacted versions in Bartolomé de Las Casas’s *Apologética Historia* (Madrid, 1909) and Pietro Martire d’Anghiera’s *Décadas* (Seville, 1511), but unlike these former works, the translation offered here is not a new translation of the Italian original, but rather of Arrom’s 1987 Spanish language version. In that Spanish edition Arrom essentially took up the linguistic and etymological debate that had been initiated by E.G. Bourne’s translation and annotation (1906). Arrom demonstrated the fallacy of a number of Bourne’s interpretations and went on to provide a series of new identifications and interpretations of the names and words found in Pané’s *Account*.

This was a useful exercise since the complexities of this document’s orthography are intricate. Pané transcribed the native terms he collected, not in his natal tongue (Catalan) but in Castilian. This version was then translated into Italian for inclusion in a Venetian publication of Ferdinand Columbus’s biography of his father. As Arrom acknowledges, this makes reconstruction of the ethnographic and orthographic information very problematic indeed. Bourne (1906:316) even suggested, in the face of these linguistic transformations of the original, that the Latin version of Martire d’Anghiera, and the Spanish abstract made by Las Casas, may be closer to Pané’s Spanish original than the Italian translation made by Alfonso de Ulloa.

However, beyond matters of orthography the hermeneutic approach that Arrom espouses is very limited and takes no account of the explosion over the last decade of interest in these testimonies of culture contact. This undermines the usefulness of this edition in three key ways. First, it is critical that we not only read the *Account* as a text, but also as a text with a context to its production. For example, this might lead to a more critical assessment of how the *Account* functioned in the context of demonstrating Columbus family claims to Hispaniola. In this way one may come to see the *Account*’s lapses and lacunae as a product of this context of production, and not simply of the ethnographic shortcomings of Pané himself – even if this remains a most relevant consideration.

Second, the field of anthropological and historical linguistics has recently undergone a shift in theoretical perspectives such that the basic language classifications of twenty years ago are no longer universally accepted as valid, instead often being seen as descriptive of little more than the word lists that were used to construct them. There is now a far greater interest in the careful discrimination of speech-communities, rather than formal linguistic structures, and this means that orthographic analogies are at best suggestive and at worst misleading when used to supply hypothetical etymologies. This view of linguistic practice and plurality also has profound implications for a notion of “taíno” culture, such as it is projected by Arrom, though not by Pané who never uses the term. The notion of

the “taino” may have importance for Antilleanists, but this does not obviate the question of its ethnological accuracy for designating past populations.

Third, a quite considerable literature has developed in the last few years concerning both the native population of the Caribbean and the history of native society and culture in South America more generally. These new analyses and the kinds of data on which they are based might now be fruitfully used for a broader reading of Pané’s *Account* and its “implicit understandings,” as well as the more overt ethnological items, with which Arrom chiefly deals. Moreover, much more could be made of the nature of Pané’s ethnographic experience, its wider implications for a reading of his *Account*, and the context of other contemporary ethnological writings. In this manner the significance of the materials Pané presents, the forms of representation he chooses, and the argumentation by which they are interpreted, as well as the lacunae, necessarily become integral to the textual commentary.

For this edition Arrom has chosen a very limited approach – to try to reconstruct and/or make systematic the *original* Spanish manuscript of Pané, now lost. This project originates with the nineteenth-century Cuban intellectual Antonio Bachiller y Morales, as Arrom acknowledges (p. 83), and is entwined with the laudable ambitions of Antilleanist scholars to give due weight and significance to the Amerindian heritage of the Caribbean through a serious scholarly attempt to reconstitute its cultural and linguistic forms. Unfortunately this is apt to lead to the erasure of significant ethnological information, as is the case with Arrom’s reconstruction of the term *naboria* (p. 36). Arguably the term *giahuuauariù*, as given in the Italian translation of Pané’s *Account* (note 138), is actually cognate with *inharou* / *oubéerou*, native terms for a female concubine.

It should be clear, then, that Arrom’s translated text is actually a mix of the Italian translation made by Ulloa, the “epitome” made by Martire d’Anghiera, and the descriptions given by Las Casas in the *Apologetica Historia*. This has been done due to the possible shortcomings in Pané’s linguistic and literary abilities, and with the presumption that the materials from Martire and Las Casas should be given ethnological and linguistic priority (note 82) over Pané’s own descriptions. While this procedure certainly makes the text more accessible, it is fraught with potential error. Thus Martire d’Anghiera, unlike Las Casas, never went to the Indies, much less Hispaniola, and Pané himself certainly shows an admirable degree of that reflexivity and awareness that observation is born of expectation as much as experience. In point of fact Pané *is* ethnographically reflexive on precisely the issues of his lack of a systematic portrayal of native culture (pp. 10, 12, 17, 20, 22, 42), as he is no less frank about missing information that he failed to collect (pp. 18-19). In this way the text itself may be said to implicitly illustrate the context for Pané’s ethnography. Through a close reading of his *Account* we may be able to perceive some of the nuances of the varying political interests and ritual proclivities of the native population. This is particularly so in the passages that discuss the conversion of the lord Guarionex (pp. 38-41).

Equally in need of further interpretation and commentary are the descriptions of the *zemi* cult and its attendant ritual, since only the putative etymologies and

translations of the names of *zemis* are discussed here by Arrom. This precludes consideration of other aspects of the descriptions in Pané's *Account* that would be considered central by historical anthropologists, such as the prophecy of the Spaniards' arrival by a *zemi* (p. 35), or the elite nature of *zemi* worship. The relative scarcity of *zemi* worship outside Hispaniola, which Las Casas emphasizes (pp. 65 ff), also seems to directly contradict the idea of a unitary, or even very widespread, "taíno" culture, as described by the *Account*. Indeed, both Pané and Las Casas seem to imply that their observations related rather more to the practices of the rulers than the ruled. These themes will therefore need to be explored further before a more adequate interpretation of Pané's *Account* can be achieved.

Bos's *Some Recoveries in Guiana Indian Ethnohistory* is not a high profile, theoretically committed work in the way that the volumes by Arrom and Cook are, but his engagement and patient fascination with the minutiae of the historiography of the region is something of a welcome relief. The idea of "antiquarian" seems to best sum up Bos's approach to a number of historical sites and issues. These include the history of the Pirara portage (also recently discussed by Peter Rivière [1995]), the evidence for the existence of certain elusive ethnicities (such as the Wai-wai and the Paragotos), a digest and discussion of an important document of native testimony from the period of Moravian evangelism, and the "mythical tribes" or monstrous races of native imagination. However, Bos's methodology is eclectic and untroubled by wider questions of historical representation, so although he provides an excellent and intricate discussion of source materials (precisely what is lacking in the Arrom and Cook volumes), he does not address the wider discursive properties of the documentary materials he discusses. In particular his discussion of the "mythical tribes" could have led to important conclusions about the nature of native mythical and historical consciousness and its interaction with European notions of alterity. Nonetheless, this volume will delight those with an interest in the complexities of Guiana historiography and the author is to be commended for his singular dedication to such questions.

These three volumes make it clear that much still needs to be done in order to supplant previous ways of knowing the past – that we need to go beyond recapitulations of the colonial ethnology, enumeration, and extinction of native peoples.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Convict and the Colonel. RICHARD PRICE. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.
xviii + 285 pp. (Cloth US\$ 27.50, Paper US\$ 18.00)

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The setting is Martinique, the French West Indian island that the author visited for the first time as an undergraduate in 1962. A well-known Caribbeanist, anthropologist Richard Price writes here a book that explodes the traditional confines of his field as he elegantly poaches into others' domains – the mystery writers', the biographers', as well as the cultural studies scholars'. The resulting blend makes for an enjoyable reading, even though what Price has to say is not entirely meant to cheer up the reader. The Martiniquan interpretations are complex, varied and changing to such an extent that there is no happy ending, no resolution in sight, only the assurance that there are more interpretations to come.

Richard Price, happily supported by an impeccable taste for forceful illustrations, is indeed a master narrator under whose literary charms one can easily fall in this relatively short piece of work that draws heavily on his intimate knowledge of Martinique in the French West Indies. In and of itself the narrative holds together, in its detailed exploration of different inflections and contradictions in the implementation of modernization. Behind such a narrative there is a powerful cultural critique of imposed modernization and a devastating indictment of French colonialism in general, even though the book is securely anchored in incidents and events that occurred in Martinique. Price's narrative however leads him to a great many excursions outside of Martinique: to nearby French Guiana and its formidable penitentiary; to North Africa and its convicts; to black Africa,

its riflemen, its former slaves and a former ruler; and to France itself, at the center of the empire, yet at the periphery of Martinique. What interests Price is decidedly not far-off France, but Martinique realities *qua* part of the larger West Indian cultural ensemble.

What the alliterative title of the manuscript suggests is a certain matter-of-fact, commonsensical unity, that of the island itself in its insular geography. But the title also suggests a powerfully contrastive tension. At the top of the social hierarchy, there is, ensconced in its successful status and established role, the "colonel," French of course, white, a *béké* (i.e. born in the West Indies from French parents), politically active and conservative, well-endowed and well-connected Maurice de Coppens, a rum distillery owner, the very image of the French colonialist, who can get away with almost everything. At the bottom of the same social hierarchy there is a "convict," poor Médard Aribot, the very image of the trampled "colonized," a marginal, a loser, a semi-trickster, a petty thief victimized by the system, a local member of the underclass. Events, which span most of the twentieth century, of course come and muddle everything. The colonel, now more or less forgotten, is killed in a post-electoral brouhaha on May 24, 1925. The convict, born in 1901, does not die before 1973, of natural causes, and has now been "discovered," as an original, and an artist, by the tourist industry as well as by intellectuals. Different Martiniquans "read" these historical events differently, negotiate different identities for these two characters. The same events and the same characters are those Price uses to illustrate what he calls "the seine of history" (pp.121-217), that is, in his own terms "to explore how one generation's powerful historical metaphors could so quickly become the next generation's trivial pursuit" (p. 157). As could be expected from Price's critical stance, the title, emblematic in its own right, reverses the colonial hierarchy, begins with the convict and relegates, as it were, the colonel to the end.

After an initial prologue where Price "situates" himself on the Martinique scene, after a first chapter devoted to the evocation of "*la guerre du Diamant*" in which Colonel Coppens perished, after a second chapter focusing on Médard Aribot, a loner, a simpleton, a man of supernatural strength, an artistic genius, a gentle eccentric, and possibly a madman, Price proceeds to a broader reflection on what he calls, accurately, in my opinion, the "theatre of marginality" that involves a "master narrative of loss" as well as a "current renegotiation of identities." And this is a theatre in which all Martiniquans play one way or the other, whether poor fishermen and peasants or well-educated intellectuals, whether locals or *négropolitains*. But for Price, "it would be a rash ethnographer who could feel certain that Médard and the *guerre du Diamant* might not emerge from their present 'folkloric' trappings and assume their place as part of the richer historical

experience that makes Martinique and its people all they are, or might one day become" (p. 213).

The appeal of the book partly derives from Price's uncanny ability to explore *la guerre du Diamant* (which is but one of a large number of harsh colonial confrontations during the early twentieth century) and the life of Médard Aribot as two threads in the ongoing history of Martinique, and in the protracted negotiations of Martiniquan identities. Price has selected these two events because he could weave them with other historical events that are interpreted and reinterpreted by all to shape the contested history of the island. While Price has something to say about French colonization in general and the Caribbean at large, as well the politics of memory, he always keeps close to particular events from which he astutely spins layers and layers of meaning. This is a brilliant achievement.

Carefully crafted, engaging and powerful, his narrative is exceptionally well-written in a style that – supreme mastery! – seems effortless. It is a style upon which Price has complete control, a style that is reined in when necessary for clarity of expression and a style that is let loose when a hint of lyricism is called for. The end result is a delightful piece of work, on target in exposing French colonialism in the Caribbean context, efficient in its arguments, suggestive in its instances, and sensitive to the historical and cultural complexities it exposes and disentangles for our benefit.

True to his goal of eschewing completion, the book does not end; even though the word "fin" appears on p. 217, the text sputters further, until p. 285 to be precise. And even this false end is mitigated, as the paragraph that precedes it is made up of questions. Its last sentence, "How might one also write about that?" (p. 217), echoes the anthropologist's self-doubt, and the wish "to question in unexpected ways the nature of power." At the end of the millennium, anthropologists have come a long way, indeed.

Still inspired by this "last" page, and in spite of my appreciation of the book, I must take exception less of course with Price's final query about the nature of power than with the expeditive way with which Price feels at liberty to dismiss Clifford Geertz's "mini-narratives with the narrator in them." Was it really necessary to seem to sacrifice on the fashionable altar of Geertz-bashing?

Caribbean Romances: The Politics of Regional Representation. BELINDA EDMONDSON (ed.). Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999. vii + 228 pp. (Cloth US\$ 55.00, Paper US\$ 18.50)

Making Men: Gender, Literary Authority, and Women's Writing in Caribbean Narrative. BELINDA EDMONDSON. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1999. x + 229 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95, Paper US\$ 17.95)

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Caribbean Romances contains ten lively essays dealing with different aspects of contemporary Caribbean culture. Music and Carnival feature prominently, as do the politics of identity in Martinique and Haiti, Trinidad, and Puerto Rico. Derek Walcott and Édouard Glissant are constant reference points for their cultural criticism. Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* represents "high" literature, Valerie Belgrave's *Ti Marie* the popular kind. The varied backgrounds and interests of the contributors make for the kind of genuinely interdisciplinary volume that is fully in keeping with the high ideals of the New World Series to which the collection belongs.

Many of the chapters offer a combination of theoretical reflection and case study. So, for example, Shalini Puri's "Canonized Hybridities, Resistant Hybridities: Chutney Soca, Carnival, and the Politics of Nationalism" opens with a general discussion of theories of hybridity before moving into the fascinating case of "cultural douglarization" in Trinidad, "douglar" being the term for a child of mixed Black/Indian parents. Her chief example is the success of Drupatee Ramgoonai on the national calypso stage in 1988 with the soca chutney song, "Lick Down Me Nani."

Two of the book's best chapters interrogate the powerful discourses of *mestizaje* (in Puerto Rico) and *créolité* (in Martinique). Catherine Den Tandt's "All That is Black Melts into Air: *Negritud* and Nation in Puerto Rico" traces the place of *negritud* in Puerto Rico's cultural project of national self-definition, paying attention to the important work of José Luís González, but focusing on two less well-known examples – Lucecita's 1973 song, "Soy de una raza pura," and Javier Cardona's 1997 performance piece, "You don't look like." Den Tandt's essay is less eager than some of the others in the volume to offer solutions and programs, tending rather to stress the complexity of the Puerto Rican situation while noting that ques-

tions of race, constantly displaced especially in the official national discourse, have a tendency to reappear in cultural and artistic expression.

In "Shadowboxing in the Mangrove: The Politics of Identity in Postcolonial Martinique," Richard Price and Sally Price offer a sustained critique of the essentialist and masculinist notions inherent in the purportedly antiracial and anticolonial discourse of *créolité*. While questioning the movement's 1989 manifesto, *Éloge de la créolité*, especially with respect to its historical revisionism, they also have a more recent and extremely rich contemporary document to discuss, the 1995 film *L'exil de Béhanzin*, its screenplay written by one of the *créolistes*, Patrick Chamoiseau.

"Shadowboxing" is more than twice as long as almost all the other chapters (some of which do look rather thin in comparison), but it makes good use of its length to provide a detailed and grounded contextualization of the *créolité* movement, emphasizing both the Martinique that produced it and the wider Caribbean – which the *créolistes* have tended to ignore. The replacement of the maroon hero by the *conteur*, the attempt to suggest a Norman basis for Creole, the invention of a beautiful creole love for King Béhanzin, exiled in Martinique from Dahomey – all these *créoliste* moves chime with what Den Tandt describes of the analogous discourse of *mestizaje* in Puerto Rico.

The weakest element of the volume is its overall framework, as indicated in the title *Caribbean Romances*. However understood, this is not a concept that seems to have animated many of the contributors; of the few who make reference to it, Faith Smith is analyzing *Ti Marie*, written as a conventional literary romance, and Kevin Meehan, in offering a highly appreciative account of Jean-Bertrand Aristide's deployment of the political rhetoric of romance, is, as the editor somewhat wryly notes, using the term in a manner completely opposite to the sense she is trying to introduce as the book's guiding theme.

In that introduction Belinda Edmondson argues that certain idealized representations of the Caribbean, which she wishes to call "romance tropes," have become mystified into regional symbols or clichés offering to identify an essential Caribbeanness. The existence of such clichés is hardly contentious, although very little chapter and verse is offered. Their linkage to the literary-historical use of the term "romance" is, however, inadequately argued. Edmondson wishes to implicate the traditional meaning of romance inasmuch as the features we associate with literary romance – conventional plotting, formulaic heroes and villains – have become the classic clichés of fictional narrative, just as, say, cultural hybridity has become a cliché of Caribbeanness. But an argument which goes "cultural hybridity is a cliché, romance has become a cliché, therefore cultural hybridity is a form of romance" is simply a logical non sequitur which does little to help the

volume's coherence. For once it is to the book's ultimate benefit that most of the contributors go their own ways.

Belinda Edmondson's own book has as its project the imbrication of what she calls "two apparently unrelated phenomena" (p. 1): the Victorian sensibilities of a generation of Caribbean male writers – such as C.L.R. James, V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, and Derek Walcott – and the *Caribbean* sensibilities of a generation of what she calls "migrant women" writers from the region who currently live in the United States – such as Michelle Cliff, Paule Marshall, and Jamaica Kincaid (p. 2). Her twin contentions are that those male writers' sense of their literary vocation was founded on the meanings of manhood and cultural authority inherited from nineteenth-century British intellectuals; and that those women writers have therefore had to rewrite the paradigm of the gentleman author in order construct a new notion of literary authority. The book is divided into two parts, each with three chapters: "Making Men: Writing the Nation" and "Writing Women: Making the Nation."

As the author realizes, the book's structure seems to set up a rigidly binary argument: the older generation is exclusively male, the younger exclusively female and exclusively non-resident in the Caribbean. In mitigation, she offers some consideration of how Jean Rhys's work might alter the book's fundamental contentions and some recognition that they would equally be complicated if she had written about, say, Caryl Phillips; but she cannot dispel the feeling that the book's structure weights the scales far too heavily in favor of the author's thesis.

Although the issues discussed in *Making Men* are of major importance, the book is usually too busy moving forward to the next writer or the next example to pause long enough for careful analysis of individual texts. Some of the choices of text are also questionable: the chapter on James and Naipaul ("Literary Men and the English Canonical Tradition") finds it easy to list their debts to various senses of Englishness, often Victorian – after all, they both declaim those debts frequently enough; but it does not even mention *The Enigma of Arrival*, surely Naipaul's most complex meditation on his relationship with Englishness.

The third chapter, "Representing the Folk," takes on more of a challenge in that its main subjects, Lamming and Brathwaite, are less obviously linked to Victorian writing than James and Naipaul. Unfortunately, the argument sounds thin. To say, for example, that "Lamming's vision of the West Indian novel 'restoring' the peasant to life" (Lamming's claim in *The Pleasures of Exile*) "evokes the similar visioning of the West Indies by Carlyle and the Victorian intellectuals, who liken the region to a sleeping beauty who must be 'awakened' by the touch of the English conqueror" (p. 60) is to offer a specious analogy in which "evokes the similar" is asked to

cover the missing work which might actually establish a connection. The section on Brathwaite is more successful, perhaps because his set of Victorian references, unexpectedly scattered within a basically nationalist project, take some teasing out; but before much is achieved, Brathwaite is replaced by Claude McKay and Una Marson, and the chapter's impetus is dissipated.

Part II begins with a ground-clearing chapter, "Theorizing Caribbean Feminist Aesthetics," which usefully establishes a model for Caribbean female subjectivity through an interrogation of contemporary African American and feminist theory. "The Novel of Revolution and the Unrepresentable Black Woman" then adds to the extensive critical literature about rewritings of *The Tempest*. As elsewhere in *Making Men*, there are interesting points made here, some of which are relevant to the book's overall thesis; and a reasonable analysis of Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone To Heaven* is offered. However, the chapter also indicates two of the book's major weaknesses. To begin with, George Lamming's reading of *The Tempest* in *The Pleasures of Exile* is contextualized by reference to other Caribbean readings of the play, most of which followed Lamming's, such as that by Roberto Fernández Retamar. So:

Retamar's image of the mestizoized Caliban thus updates Martí's dream of a colorblind New World. It also defuses the negative image of Caliban in the novel *Ariel*, by early Latin American nationalist José Enrique Rodo [who loses the accent on Rodó throughout]. In this novel Caliban, as the brute who terrorizes his compatriot Ariel, is meant to symbolize U.S. aggression. (p. 111)

These sentences appear, rhetorically, to be spoken in the author's voice; yet nobody who has even glanced at *Ariel* could imagine that it is a novel, and in *Ariel* no brutish character called Caliban terrorizes Ariel (Caliban is only very briefly mentioned). Just as worryingly, no such misreading of *Ariel* could easily be drawn from Retamar's essay either. Chinese whispers is a dangerous game for scholars to play. There are in fact whole runs of references in the notes which read "quoted in," suggesting an unhealthy reliance on pre-digested views.

The second weakness, perhaps ultimately more debilitating, can be illustrated by the following comment on the ending of Lamming's *Water with Berries*:

In this way, the narrative of *Water with Berries* establishes the gendered terms by which nationhood must be established. The dialectics of rapist and victim, landlady and tenant, owner and owned, are used to illustrate the necessity of masculine agency for the West Indian intellectual in his quest to define the disembodied region of the Caribbean on the European map. Like James, for Lamming revolutionary success ultimately lies with one central figure, the intellectual. (p. 122)

Now *Water with Berries*, whatever the final critical verdict on it, is hardly a straightforward novel (and one might expect rather more caution in any account of it). But it is difficult to imagine any reading of the novel's final chapters which would see Lamming unproblematically advocating the behavior of his characters on the grounds that that behavior is necessary for ultimate "revolutionary success." At the very minimum there is no clear authorial statement from Lamming; but surely, for any reading not committed to having the novel conform to some pre-established agenda, there is also ambiguity, irony, pathos, tragedy, despair – all the elements of literary subtlety and political complication that *Making Men* is much too inclined to ignore.

Caribbean Shadows & Victorian Ghosts. KATHLEEN J. RENK. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999. ix + 174 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.50, Paper US\$ 16.50)

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Critical works that focus on Caribbean women writers are always welcome, given the condition of "unheardness" of black women's voices. Kathleen Renk's *Caribbean Shadows and Victorian Ghosts* is one of the most intriguing titles which has been published of late; it also appears to be one of the most ambitious.

Renk's declared intention is to unearth what in her view critics have not brought to light, namely, the relation between contemporary Caribbean representations of motherhood and those of the Victorian mother, the historical link between madness and race, and "the vital textual connections between Caribbean narratives and nineteenth-century British and colonial discourse." At the same time, however, her 174-page text also aims at showing how Caribbean women writers re-imagine the Caribbean and how "they approach the failures of nationalism, specifically in relation to women's lives and social-political expectations" (p. 7). This is carried out through an analysis of the re-writing strategies of five writers: Jean Rhys, Erna Brodber, Michelle Cliff, Jamaica Kincaid, and Dione Brand – even if

several other writers are discussed, among whom Olive Senior, Earl Lovelace, Paule Marshall, and Claude McKay.

The five women on whom she centers her analysis are defined as postindependence writers. The inclusion of Rhys among them leads to incongruous affirmations like "Postindependence women writers were also assisted by the work of many earlier women writers, for example, Mary Seacole, Pamela Smith, Henrietta Jenkins, Sylvia Wynter and Merle Hodge" (p. 12). Renk offers to read Caribbean female texts not merely as resistance to dominant discourses, but as subversion of the central myth of the family dating back to colonial times. Correlated to this family myth is that of England as a garden, a heaven on earth transmitted through spectacle "to overawe the natives" (p. 31).

Positioned as a child in the great English imperial family, the Caribbean has absorbed destructive Victorian codes. Merely acknowledged by male writers, the dismantling of this value system has, according to Renk, become the focus of fiction by women. As they articulate their writing across the boundaries imposed by colonial power and nationalist writers – taking their narratives away from what Édouard Glissant has called the "imitative elite" texts – women have gone beyond the family and garden myths, beyond the nineteenth-century English realist mode of narration, and thus have moved "their narratives closer to decolonization."

Renk barely alludes to differences between the five writers, stressing instead their commonalities. These include the reversal of the Anancy tale, bringing forth the voice of the subaltern, revisioning history, and producing an "alternate consciousness" through the dreamscape. She joins the long list of critics who have pointed to rewriting as the main concern of women writers from the region in their efforts to move outside structures of oppression. However, unlike other critics, who have warned against "trimming" women's writing "to fit [any] neat paradigm," Renk tends to overgeneralize (see O'Callaghan 1993:101). As she draws on Trinh Minh-ha to assert that the oral tradition is "the foundation for the writing of women of color," she forgets that one of the writers she analyzes, Jamaica Kincaid, has affirmed: "My writing does not come from that [storytelling]. My writing, if I owe anybody, it would be Charlotte Bronte. It would be English people" (Ferguson 1994:169).

The same generalizing tendency leads Renk to assert that Caribbean women writers reconceive the family and the nation as "alliances among oppressed people" (p. 13). While this is certainly true of Michelle Cliff, one of the writers she discusses at greater length, it cannot be extended to all. Kincaid, a very individualistic writer, does not share Cliff's ideological stand. She has indeed declared that she does not link her destiny to that of the African diaspora. This notwithstanding, Renk asserts that these women have "broadly redefined family first in a manner that resembles pre-slavery

and pre-colonial family configurations and then as a connection among peoples who have experienced similar colonial oppression or who are experiencing neocolonial oppression" (p. 10).

Readers can take issue with her insistence on Europe and Africa as cultural matrices, which makes Caribbean culture appear as merely derivative and imitative. Although of European and African descent, as well as Indian in some cases, Caribbean features have their own configuration and also exist in their own right. Also, Caribbean readers might not agree with her assumption that nineteenth-century colonial representation "shaped, and continue to shape, the way the Caribbean *views itself* and is viewed by the First world" (emphasis added) (p. 89).

The insightful discussion of single writers is thus at times marred by Renk's blanket assertions and by her reading of intersections in Caribbean women's work as dominant characteristics of women's writing from the region. Her captivating title is broader in scope than the content of the book. For instance, Victorian sexuality is discussed, but only in relation to the theme of madness. Yet, especially compared to Anglophone and Hispanophone female writers, sexuality is an issue which women from the English-speaking Caribbean, with few exceptions, have traditionally skirted and only recently explored through homosexuality.

The book would perhaps have been more satisfactory had Renk in her analysis of the writers' strategies not forced them into a grid – albeit anti-canonical – which they inevitably elude.

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Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature. NANA WILSON-TAGOE. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998. xiii + 328 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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Nana Wilson-Tagoe's *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature* represents a thorough study of the historical imagination of many of the most important figures in West Indian literature, ranging from Wilson Harris and Edward Kamau Brathwaite to Merle Hodge and Erna Brodber. Beginning with an introduction in which she articulates the scope and focus of her study and a first chapter on the development of Caribbean historiography, Wilson-Tagoe devotes each chapter to a careful, sensitive, and insightful reading of individual authors. Her second chapter deals with Edgar Mittelholzer and V.S. Reid, and V.S. Naipaul is the subject of her third chapter. Chapter 4 examines the works of George Lamming and Chapter 5 those of Wilson Harris. Derek Walcott merits two chapters, beginning with a study of his poetry in Chapter 6 and then continuing on to his drama in Chapter 7. Edward Kamau Brathwaite is the subject of Chapter 8, and a number of West Indian women writers are unfortunately compressed into Chapter 9, rather than each receiving a chapter of her own, as the male authors do. After a brief discussion of the role of Africa in the historical imagination of West Indian writers in Chapter 10, Wilson-Tagoe finishes with an equally brief conclusion.

A truly solid piece of scholarship, the book demonstrates an admirable depth and breadth, bringing together a wide variety of literary works and essays in a densely constructed study. The only weakness of the text surfaces in the early theoretical chapters, especially the introduction, where Wilson-Tagoe deploys deconstructive arguments to disable a number of binary oppositions, only to refer to these categories later in the text as if they had never been dismissed. The most obvious instances of this maneuver occur when dealing with her deconstruction of oppositions that turn around notions of history and fiction. She proposes that the categories of historical narrative and fictional narrative cannot easily be distinguished due to their shared reliance on narrative tropes, writerly subjectivity, and creative expression, and she offers no explanation of how to shore up the explanatory power of these categories. But if this is so, the logic of her argument would not allow her to use the category of fiction writing, or at

the very least would require her to call into question the notion of fiction writing as a practice, which she fails to do in her later discussions.

Due to the structure of the text, however, this is a much less serious criticism than it might seem, for the theoretical argument developed in the early part of the text is not central to the critical readings of individual authors and seems almost separate from the rest of the study. Thus the very real strengths of the book shine through the moment one gets beyond these early chapters, and the intelligence and attentiveness of the readings of the authors examined guarantee that readers will not be disappointed. In the last instance, Nana Wilson-Tagoe's *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature* would be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of any scholar interested in the historical imagination in contemporary West Indian literature.

Beating a Restless Drum: The Poetics of Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott. JUNE D. BOBB. Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 1998. viii + 256 pp. (Cloth US\$ 79.95, Paper US\$ 21.95)

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Beating a Restless Drum is well named, for although it delivers what it promises (an examination of the poetic theories and practices of Brathwaite and Walcott), it is itself quite restless in doing other things as well. It identifies Brathwaite and Walcott as the two pre-eminent poets of the English-speaking Caribbean, compares their respective merits, and acknowledges their pioneering role in laying a foundation on which younger poets of the region can build. Beginning in the 1950s, Brathwaite and Walcott faced the challenge of establishing a new tradition of Caribbean poetry in English. They were able to meet the challenge, largely, as June Bobb argues, through their "response to the annihilation of self inculcated in Caribbean people by both European and Caribbean colonials and their modernist counterparts" (p. 226).

The names of Bobb's four chapters foreshadow her general argument: (1) "Reconceiving Self and World"; (2) "Africa and the Poetic Imagination"; (3) "Language as Salvation"; (4) "Epic Rhythms in the Caribbean." The argument is that Brathwaite and Walcott reconceived or reformulated a sense of West Indian nationality or identity out of fragments left by four centuries of

African slavery in the Caribbean. In the process, they utilized indigenous, regional, linguistic resources, and created poetic rhythms or patterns that later served as models for younger Caribbean poets like Lorna Goodison, Jean Binta Breeze, Grace Nichols, Cynthia James, Fred D'Aguiar, Kendel Hippolyte, and Mutabaruka. In her conclusion, Bobb quotes approvingly from the preface to Hippolyte's anthology, *Confluence*: "sundering questions of race, colonialism, Caribbean identity, that split society and self in the two previous decades, are not confronting [younger poets] in the same way" (p. 235). In other words, precisely because of the thorough examination of race, color, class, colonialism, identity, nationality, and related themes by Brathwaite and Walcott, younger Caribbean poets can feel free to consider fresh approaches to these themes or strike out in altogether new directions.

Beating a Restless Drum systematically analyzes individual poems by both authors, side by side and in chronological sequence. The analysis reveals many original insights, makes useful comparisons, and illuminates hidden meanings through reference to well-known Caribbean commentators like Édouard Glissant and Rex Nettleford, international theoreticians like Mikhail Bakhtin, Henry Louis Gates, and Homi Bhabha, and such Caribbean critics as Lloyd Brown and Gordon Rohlehr. All this confirms the book's status as a work of meticulous and painstaking scholarship, for Bobb has roamed far and wide to find historical, sociological, and theoretical material to corroborate her own reading of individual texts by Brathwaite and Walcott and support her claims for both poets.

While one cannot quarrel with Bobb's main claim that Brathwaite and Walcott established a new poetic tradition by considering issues of identity and nationality and utilizing indigenous Caribbean linguistic resources, it would be possible to express some reservation about her treatment of the "need to locate the Caribbean experience solely in Africa" (p. 53) and her suggestion that "In *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, the vision of Derek Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite converge" (p. 104). To be fair, Bobb only acknowledges the "need" of some Caribbean writers to see Caribbean experience as fundamentally African in origin, and she also considers that "Africa, in Walcott's poetic world does not have the same all-consuming power of anchorage and homing that it has for Brathwaite" (p. 54). Yet her obvious enthusiasm for Brathwaite's vigorous, informed, and inspired evocation of Caribbean links to Africa contrasts sharply with her rather defensive advocacy of Walcott.

The fact is that a poem like Walcott's "A Far Cry from Africa" expresses an ambivalent outlook toward Africa that bears no comparison to the solidly African-centered vision in many of Brathwaite's poems, and to blame previous critics for emphasizing a polarity between Brathwaite and Walcott does not satisfactorily explain striking differences in the two poets' respective attitudes towards Africa. But this is a controversial issue that cannot be

easily resolved, and if Bobb's preference for a Brathwaitean, African-centered Caribbean vision comes through her analysis it should not be regarded as either limiting or misleading. On the contrary, it adds force and consistency to her insights, opinions, and arguments. Most of all, it suggests passionate commitment to her subject; and when we consider the admirable lucidity and clarity with which she writes in *Beating a Restless Drum*, Bobb certainly deserves our thanks for a book from which we can learn a great deal about Brathwaite and Walcott, about Caribbean poetry in general, and about Caribbean history and culture.

Places of Silence, Journeys of Freedom: The Fiction of Paule Marshall.
EUGENIA C. DELAMOTTE. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,
1998. x + 198 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95)

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At the end of the twentieth century, when the stridency of the male-female binary of feminism has enlarged into a recognition of the broad gender playing field, Eugenia DeLamotte's analysis of Paule Marshall's fiction brings an insightful awareness to the complex issues that have occupied Marshall for almost fifty years. Race, colonialism, class, and multiple citizenship interweave with divergent sexualities in an interlocking bite in *Places of Silence, Journeys of Freedom*. In fact, by couching her argument under the veil of feminism as one of its major contributions to scholarship, DeLamotte undersells a work that is very much a researcher's trove in shared boundaries such as psychology, economics, gender studies, and Third World politics. The book is a chronological study of Marshall's vision, played out through characters who wrestle with spanning their selfhood across a multiplicity of allegiances, while striving to remain true to themselves, their self-growth, and their necessary pact with the various communities to which they belong simultaneously.

DeLamotte's main agenda is Marshall's interest in binaries, both as textual fabric and as artistic method, the main one being the interplay of silence and voice in the repression and awakening of characters. She argues that a complex interweaving of oppressive hegemonies throws Marshall's characters upon themselves into zones of non-speech. But silence does not

present the would-be controller with a safe haven from the repressed or speechless. The problematic for the repressed is self-discovery through an acknowledgment of cultural memory and private history. When cultural memory is acknowledged (whether it be for the white hegemonic Harriet or the black materialistic Avey), characters go into crisis and sites of silence become sites of resistance. Reclaiming self and private history challenges distorted public history. Hegemonies may not disappear but in the well-known feminist analogy, "voicing it" either inwardly or outwardly becomes the path to action and to freedom.

DeLamotte also focuses on the stylistic and narrative aspects of Marshall's use of silence and voice. She notes Marshall's play with superimposition and doubleness in her use of DuBois's double consciousness and Ralph Ellison's invisibility and shadow-and-act paradigms. These paradigms explore the paradoxes of self-knowledge, double exposure, and inversion. *Places of Silence, Journeys of Freedom* cites Marshall's texts as progressive allegories: *Brown Girl, Brownstones* as social, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* as psychological, *Praisesong for the Widow* as spiritual, and *Daughters*, where silence is most gendered, as an allegory of independence and a "conflation ... of discourse[s]."

The argument develops in four chapters, each treating one of the novels, but *Reena and Other Stories* is not ignored. The mix of autobiographical, stylistic, and ideological elements of "Brooklyn," for example, illuminate in black and white how the struggle for voice and its metaphors of journey are unclothed in the superimposed exposures of the controller and the controlled by the lake in Professor Berman's domain. Analysis is at times turgid, but here the superimposition of narrative ingredients is revealed: the historical objectification of Miss Williams's black body, the battle royale over her budding writer's craft, and the inversion of power as Miss Williams "comes to voice."

One of the strengths of DeLamotte's analysis is its thoroughgoing and unconventional exploration of places and paradigms of silence and voice. The structural hegemony of the brownstone house with its resident, white legacy, Miss Mary at the top; upward mobility as seen in Beryl Challenor's parroting of her father; the insistence of Silla's voice, unmaning her husband, Deighton, are places of silence. Meanwhile, Silla's kitchen is voiced with movement towards control of private history. The factory, Vere's pseudo-masculinist machine, the canefields, the strangulation of First World exploitation in *Chosen Place, Timeless People* and *Daughters*; the most unlikely place – Sugar's Club with its false camaraderie and memorabilia, speaking generations of goodwill; these are all places of silence.

The main achievements of DeLamotte's study are its holistic approach to major concerns of Marshall's fiction and its effort to negotiate a broad spectrum of pertinent ideologies for texts, so diasporic and situated at so

many borders of cross-Atlantic discourses. Thus, while analysis comes out of a feminist frame, multiple gender bases are drawn on. Similarly, the study engages alongside African American critical theory, post-colonial parallels, notably the exploration of Bourne Island as a Heart of Darkness allegory. The work is a balanced exploration of Marshall's dichotomies: of being American and West Indian, or Jewish and white like Saul and Harriet as much as being black like Merle Kibona; of the hidden racism behind white benevolence as well as bigotry and classicism among materialist blacks. However, a text dealing with so many Caribbean experiences would have benefited from a cultural exploration of the particularities of Caribbean gender, calypso, and Carnival as theorized by West Indian scholars such as Carolyn Cooper and Gordon Rohlehr.

Sir Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship Across Continents. PAUL THEROUX. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1998. vii + 376 pp. (Cloth £17.99)

After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie. MICHAEL GORRA. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. x + 207 pp. (Cloth US\$ 35.00, Paper US\$ 14.95)

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Sir Vidia's Shadow is a difficult book to read, and not only because of its excruciatingly bad prose. It is deeply personal, and most of the personal detail is objectionable and reprehensible. Yet all things personal are also always political, especially if the subjects are two writers who have written overtly political books about various countries. Most reviews of the book that have appeared see it as vindictive and salacious and are themselves often vindictive and salacious; the press throughout the world has made of the book a sensational story of the sort that promotes the sale of tabloids. The only productive way to read this book, to my mind, is as the product of a certain culture, just as those reviews and articles with juicy extracts from it can be read as symptomatic of the hollowness of international journalistic culture.

The particular culture the book engages is that of neocolonial intellectual formation. Both V.S. Naipaul and Paul Theroux had their careers formed in the crucible of the decolonization of countries in Asia and Africa

from rule by European colonial powers. Theroux comes from the United States and spent much time in Africa and Asia, about which he has written several books, fiction and non-fiction. Naipaul is a British citizen of Indian descent, born and raised in the Caribbean, whose most famous books, also both fiction and nonfiction, are based in Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa.

Given their genealogies, it would seem that both Naipaul and Theroux were in good positions to interpret and portray the complex situations in countries that had freshly gained "independence," with all its attendant problems. Theroux, with his U.S. American notions of free speech and free movement, his rejection of Vietnam, his decision to teach in difficult conditions in an unstable Africa, and his uninhibited mixing with native Africans, was placed both intimately in the context and distant enough. Naipaul, with his experience of "multicultural" Trinidad as a member of a family who came from India as indentured laborers, his unhappy education in repressive Oxbridge, and his position as a member of a racial minority in Africa, the Caribbean, and Britain, had both privileged access to and intimate knowledge of ethnic difference, formation, and conflict.

However, the bodies of work they have produced are deeply problematic, rife with prejudices and retrogressive ideological baggage of all sorts. Reading this book explains why. Primarily about Naipaul, it nevertheless tells readers as much about Theroux. This is a Theroux who does not so much as demur when Naipaul utters the most blisteringly racist nonsense about Africans and Africa; indeed he begins to see exactly what Naipaul says. After loving Africa and feeling on some days like "Albert Camus, a schoolteacher in remote Algeria" and on others like "George Orwell shooting an elephant," the post-Naipaul Theroux "liked the place less. I had begun to see it with his [Naipaul's] eyes and to speak about it using his words" (p. 144). This is a Theroux whose partner readers will not know even by name because she is referred to throughout as "my wife." This is a Theroux, most of all, who can't stop showing the reader how racist, misogynist, ill-informed, prejudicially opinionated, and ideologically contradictory Naipaul is and yet who, in 1972, wrote an almost completely uncritical book about him entitled *V.S. Naipaul: An Introduction to His Work*. How seriously can one take the politics, in relation to race, sex, society, and nation, of a writer for whom friendship means that all positions either don't matter or must be justified, even if his implicit claim in this book is that he never agreed with them?

Moreover, Theroux inadvertently displays how close to Naipaul's his own views are, whether on women, blacks, or himself. Theroux is embarrassingly adolescent in his self-regarding and self-obsessed outpourings, his homosocial idolizing of Naipaul, his bravado about his sexual prowess, his very lazy political eye, and his deeply solipsist vision. But what new information does he give readers about his subject? The Naipaul that emerges comes as really no surprise to any reader of his books. His views

on race, blacks, women, sex, and sexuality and his colonialist politics are clear in his books, which makes his immense popularity in the Western world quite disturbing, if predictable. This book can do no further damage to Naipaul and, more importantly, offers little to critics except a pile of gory detail to substantiate each of Naipaul's prejudices. All of those are far more eloquently articulated in Naipaul's own books, in prose considerably less purple than Theroux's.

If the colonial metropolitan adulation of Naipaul is worrying, even more surprising is the fact that so-called postcolonial critics write tortuously improbable defenses of Naipaul. Michael Gorra's *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* is a perfect example of how politically barren and opportunist much so-called postcolonial criticism is. The ostensible theme of the book is how writing by these three authors leads to a radical redefinition of Englishness. While this is an interesting and productive thesis, Gorra does not appear to sustain it even in a book this short. In his chapter on Naipaul, he neglects to look at texts where Naipaul explores or comments on Englishness at any length, then makes a curiously old-fashioned argument about Naipaul's "sensibility," and collapses an assertion that Naipaul's is a postcolonial aesthetic of mimicry with an admission of Naipaul's evident search for canonicity. This is surely an impossible contradiction. If anything, Naipaul's work is a late colonial response which, far from using neo-colonial responses to critique colonialism or broaden notions of Englishness, seriously undermines any sense of neocolonial complexity and fits these societies into narratives that embody exactly what the colonial centers want to hear. Gorra's likening of Naipaul's writing to a Fanonian, anti-colonial rage is laughable in its necessary abstractness and contortion.

Gorra's chapter on Paul Scott, the best in the book, is persuasive in its argument that Scott's work on India is rooted in history and steers clear of Kiplingesque or Forsterian abstraction and mythification, offering the first anti-essentialist account of national identity in British literature. However, Gorra is seriously off-mark with his sections on Rushdie. Again, he chooses the wrong text to concentrate on. *Midnight's Children* offers little comment on a redefinition of Englishness; it is much more about neocolonial India. Moreover, Gorra's critical discourse on Rushdie's use of English is very superficial. In any case, Indian English says nothing about Englishness, Asian or otherwise. Gorra does deal in passing with *The Satanic Verses*, a novel much more concerned with Englishness, but inexplicably dwells more on what it says about postcolonial India than what it says about Britain. His long digression on the BJP and notions of Indianness is fine, but it isn't about Britain! While there is a connection between the two (the BJP is funded heavily by Indians in Britain and the United States), this is not what Gorra explores.

Gorra also includes, for no apparent reason, a small piece on the fatwa controversy involving a defense of the novel, which does not have very much to do with his argument, nor does it show any sociological insight into the business of British Asian protest against the novel. This is indicative of the general epistemological confusion in Gorra's critical apparatus. By schematically dividing his focus: Scott-theme, Naipaul-sensibility and Rushdie-language (as if such criticisms were possible to the exclusion of each other), he loses out on any possibility of fruitfully combining them.

The conclusion attempts to tie these very uneven and irreconcilably different chapters into an argument about the expansion of Englishness. In doing so, it undertakes a problematic comparison between Rushdie and Naipaul. Naipaul is made to signify the relentless chronicling of the mimicry involved in postcolonial identity because there are no origins and essences; Rushdie is made to celebrate that fact and be inventive about that impurity. This involves more than just an exceedingly naive understanding of Rushdie's politics, which are closer to Naipaul's than he would like to admit. Rushdie's books about India (*The Moor's Last Sigh*, for example) and Pakistan (*Shame*), and his writing in general, reveal a colonial intellectual formation, albeit less obviously than Naipaul's, given Rushdie's complex borrowings from Western and non-Western literary traditions. A study of Rushdie would need to unravel these strands and determine where his politics reside. Gorra also elides the blatantly colonial and racist politics of Naipaul, fitting him into Homi Bhabha's critical frame without any examination of the politics of his particular portrayal of mimicry or indeed Bhabha's.

When Gorra does criticize Rushdie, it is on woolly terms, accusing him of not having "depth" and the seriousness of "longing," when surely Rushdie's point is to problematize notions of depth and longing, never mind what he says in interviews. (Another of Gorra's pet critical techniques is to take the writer's stated intention as gospel.) This critique then becomes a defense of Naipaul's seriousness in telling things as they are. Finally, both writers become, by little more than virtue of being British citizens, redefiners of Englishness. Exactly how they do this remains quite unclear at the end of Gorra's book.

Gorra could have used the fatwa to explore British Asian understandings of being British and counterpoised these with Rushdie's in his work. Instead, he uses Rushdie's platitudes about British Asians' unwillingness to accept plurality as evidence of Rushdie's plural vision and redefinition of Englishness. While he hints at class, Gorra does not see how class influences Rushdie's vision and how this can offend the bulk of Britain's Asians (and not just Muslims) for a variety of sociological reasons. As an Indian, for example, I strongly object to Rushdie's politics in almost every word he has written about India and that is not because I do not have a plural sense of my identity as an Indian.

Scant on sociological knowledge or insight, wrong in its selection of material, and pedestrian in its pontifications on secularism, values, and the nature of the literary aesthetic and its politics, Gorra's book is yet another addition to the large corpus of unproductive writing that has become fashionable under the rubric of postcolonial criticism.

Afro-Cuban Literature: Critical Junctures. EDWARD J. MULLEN. Westport: Greenwood, 1998. vi + 236 pp. (Cloth US\$ 55.00)

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Afro-Cuban Literature is an in-depth exploration of both the literary output of authors of African ancestry in Cuba and the influence of Africanity on non-black Cuban authors. Considering the current explosion of academic interest in the so-called "Other" in Britain and the continued debate on "race in writing" across the North American continent, what is most valuable about Edward Mullen's text is its comprehensive focus and the detailed analysis which is presented. Mullen provides one of the clearest and most precise definitions of a confusing aspect of Afro-Hispanic writing – "poesía negrista," "poesía de negros" and "poesía negroide." The text moves away entirely from the premise that the zenith of Afro-Cubanism spanned only the two decades of the 1920s and 1930s and upholds the ideology that it is Afro-Cubanism that has in the main shaped all Cuban narrative and more importantly, the contemporary Cuban nation.

What is most problematic about this book is Mullen's indefatigable insistence that current U.S. critical theory, especially in its Afro-centered incarnations, is pivotal to a comparison with the Cuban dichotomy. This opinion is presented early in the first chapter, "The Critical Axis":

In contrast to Latin American debates on race, which have been profoundly influenced by conceptual paradigms of cultural identity anchored in myths of racial harmony and syncretism, polemics in the more racially polarized United States have produced a more forceful and open discussion of race. From its very inception, African-American literary studies have been concerned with the issues of race canonicity and cultural identity. A by-product of the search for a genuine African-American aesthetic sensibility has been a critical vocabulary that helps to clarify the notion of racial categories – a problematic that cuts across linguistic and cultural barriers. (p. 25)

Mullen presents the cultural hybridity that marks Latin American literature as being consumed by the broader notion of a black center in the context of Cuba but he never quite manages to erase the cultural barrier of race in Cuba and thus present a specific critical theory for reading Afro-Cuban texts. Either way one finishes this book with no clear notion of Mullen's viewpoint on the issue.

The second chapter, "Peninsular Origins: Simón Aguado's *Entremés de los negros*," is the most interesting of the text. It highlights blacks in Hispanic literature as being worthy subjects dating since the fifteenth century in Spain. In addition, the chapter reflects on Cuba's status during the seventeenth century as Spain's most interesting colony in the New World with equivalent emphasis placed on her nationals. Interestingly, Mullen sums up the chapter with a description of blacks as "parts of a complex network of social relationships reflective of the tensions of seventeenth-century Spain" (p. 58). Chapter 3, "Juan Francisco Manzano: Building a Tradition," describes the life of this self-taught slave, stresses the importance of his narrative, and calls for its inclusion in what are deemed the canonical Latin American texts, especially given Manzano's status as one of the foundational black writers in Afro-Cuban literature.

In Chapter 4, "*The Black Witch Doctors*," the astute work *Hampa afrocubana: Los negros brujos* (Afro-Cuban Underworld: *The Black Witch Doctors*, 1906) of the great Cuban thinker and writer Fernando Ortiz is analyzed in great detail, as is, to a lesser extent, his *Los negros esclavos* (*The Black Slaves*, 1916). It is to be noted that Mullen does not sway from Fernando Ortiz's pioneering premise that Cuban culture is a mulatto culture but rather presents Ortiz as a Cuban intellectual whose ideals are much more Caribbean centered than would have been recognized in his day.

Chapter 5, "Nicolás Guillén's *Son Motifs*: Afro-Cubanism Comes of Age," highlights the literary output of Cuba's "poeta nacional" and most renowned exponent of Afro-Cubanism: Nicolás Guillén. However, Mullen gives no additional insight to this remarkable man and his *Motivos de son* texts. Indeed the chapter ends with the author's suggestion that much of Guillén's work is yet to be understood in its entirety. The final chapter, "Shaping the Canon: The Flowering of Afro-Cubanism," attempts to determine how inclusion in works on canonical texts comes about for black Hispanic writers. Mullen makes no substantial claim to explain inclusion; he suggests that "race" is paradoxically that which at once most admits and most decenters black writers. Of note is the inclusion in the text of the three appendices: "Afro-Cuban Poetry" by José Juan Arrom, *Black Interlude* by Simón Aguado, and *Son Motifs* by Nicolás Guillén – all in English translation.

Afro-Cuban Literature: Critical Junctures stands out as an example of literary scholarship which is completely devoted to the African contribution

and presence in Cuban literature. It is also a comprehensive history with bibliographic details and an almost encyclopedic scope. For this reviewer, however, Mullen does not reach a concrete understanding of Afro-Cubanism, which is the basis of Afro-Cuban literature. Nevertheless, for all those who are engaged in the study of the African presence and contribution to Cuban and indeed Hispanic Caribbean literature, the book is an invaluable resource in the continued debate.

The Puerto Rican Movement: Voices from the Diaspora. ANDRÉS TORRES & JOSÉ VELÁZQUEZ (eds.). Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998. xvi + 381 pp. (Cloth US\$ 69.95, Paper US\$ 24.95)

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In 1999, Puerto Ricans became a bump in the road for Hillary Clinton's erstwhile campaign for Senator of New York State. In short order, the American public was reminded again about the existence of a community that is essentially ignored despite its long history and ties to the United States. President Clinton's proposal to pardon more than a handful of Puerto Rican political prisoners given unusually long sentences for such crimes as conspiracy and possession of firearms also reminded us that Puerto Ricans have not accepted meekly either their public obscurity or their colonial relationship to the United States. Puerto Ricans, in fact, have a long and memorable history of radical politics. From 1920 to 1960, Puerto Rican radicalism centered on labor organizing in the fields and in the factories. Community based radical organizing among Puerto Ricans during the 1960s is the focus of *The Puerto Rican Movement*.

The chapters in this edited volume provide mostly first-person historical accounts of the many Puerto Rican organizations of the left in the cities of New York, Philadelphia, Hartford, and Boston. Andrés Torres provides a comprehensive and insightful introductory chapter that covers the history of Puerto Rican radicalism in the northeast United States and helps to put in perspective why it emerged, what it meant, and what its legacy was for contemporary Puerto Rican politics. As such, the introduction is a useful guide for the following chapters on particular Puerto Rican organizations of the left (the Partido Socialista Puertorriqueño, the Young Lords, Puerto

Rican Student Union, etc.) as well as leftist struggles in the Puerto Rican communities of New York, Hartford, Boston, and a few other places in the northeast. The introduction, however, failed to establish an analytical perspective sufficient to assess the true strength and impact of radical politics on Puerto Ricans in the United States.

The issue of validity is, in fact, the major question mark, not just for the introduction but for the entire volume. Torres, for example, claims that Puerto Ricans are resentful that they were never given the chance to rule their own destiny and are indignant over their treatment in this country (1998:12). But he presents no evidence to support this very important claim. This is also true of the contributors who tell their stories from memory and without the support of documentation. José E. Cruz, for example, admits to this methodological weakness when he poses the question of how, given the fragmentary and incomplete nature of the materials we use to reconstruct the past, we know we got the story right (p. 86). Documentation is nearly impossible where, as Torres admits, the historical record on this experience is almost nonexistent (p. 1). This is probably why the editors do not pitch the book as a history. It is more of a political handbook, a marker of pitfalls and traps, a source of ideas for continued struggle, and above all, a wellspring of hope (p. xiii). With no other published account of this important period in Puerto Rican history in the United States, this volume is, nevertheless, pioneering and necessary.

The reader is probably best served by treating the authors of the chapters as paper informants and triangulating the truth about particular organizations and leaders by comparing what different authors say about them. A chapter by José E. Velázquez is devoted, for instance, to the activities of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party in the United States. But references to the activities of this important organization of the Puerto Rican left are also found in a different chapter about the party in Boston, in the autobiographical story of Carmen Vivian Rivera (a Puerto Rican woman activist), and in a chapter on radicalism in Hartford, Connecticut. Similar strategies can also be used to establish a truer picture of the experience of Puerto Rican women in leftist struggles, and of the role of Puerto Rican college students.

The book, as a whole, is rich and rewarding reading. The Puerto Rican left took very little for granted in U.S. politics, tried to probe deeply into its very foundation, embraced complicated theoretical work, and tried to untangle the forces of race, class, and nation. These are the issues all of us, scholars and activists alike, must take seriously in our efforts to understand and act in this modern political world.

The Dominican Americans. SILVIO TORRES-SAILLANT & RAMONA HERNÁNDEZ. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998. xxi + 184 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95)

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The Dominican Americans presents a comprehensive introduction to one of the largest Latino groups in the United States, filling a glaring vacuum in the burgeoning discipline of Latino Studies. Using an interdisciplinary methodology, the book narrates the story of a Caribbean people whose massive migration started in the 1960s and continues to this day. In the course of an introduction and five chapters, it explores the historical, political, and economic impetus for immigration and the ensuing hybrid culture in the epicenter of the Dominican diaspora: New York City.

The authors must be commended for striking an effective balance between breadth and depth, for while the book is an ambitious introduction, it offers keen insights about the effect of immigration on notions of Dominican cultural identity. They tackle a central question in the study of immigration: what impact does immersion in a new culture have on the immigrant's earlier conception of self and society? For Torres-Saillant and Hernández, immigration causes Dominicans to "begin to reconfigure their conception of cultural identity, reevaluating the issues of class, gender, and race" (p. 145). The work adeptly supports this thesis. Any shortcomings stem from the introductory genre itself, which often allows little room for detailed evidence.

Appropriately, the book first reviews how Dominican identity is constructed on the island. The authors affirm that despite the "mulatto" nature of Dominican culture, a rampant negrophobic and anti-Haitian sentiment informs the way in which governing white elites construct national identity. By describing elite nationalist culture in these terms, they stand apart from many island-based scholars who, whether by default or design, condone a racist vision of Dominican culture. This historical discussion tills the soil for their later consideration of how many Dominican Americans embrace the African portion of their cultural heritage. By proposing that Dominican cultural identity undergoes a racial transformation in the diaspora, Torres-Saillant and Hernández implicate Dominicans within a broader pattern of immigrant racialization similar to that of Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities in the 1960s and 1970s. The book also con-

siders how the exigencies of diasporic life transform gender relations. Unlike women on the island, Dominican women in the United States are active in the work force and community and come to be seen more as partners than subservient mates in the diasporic household.

With respect to class, Torres-Saillant and Hernández are careful not to portray the Dominican community in monolithic terms. They highlight the differences between elite migrants who arrived in the early twentieth century and those of the post-1960s generation who are of working- and middle-class origin. Furthermore, they illustrate how Dominican immigration after 1960 coincided with a decrease in industrial and unskilled jobs in New York City. This discussion helps offset the emergent stereotype in American popular culture that portrays Dominicans as "the drug dealer." By juxtaposing this criminalized image with the realities of life in "postindustrial" New York, the book soundly reinterprets the rise of drug dealing as a symptom of social disempowerment rather than an indication of moral depravity.

Even though the authors demonstrate much sensitivity to the social, economic, and cultural barriers facing immigrants, they never indulge in visions of victimization. Instead, they offer an account of how Dominicans forged a community in the heart of the Big Apple. In this sense, *The Dominican Americans* is a valuable resource, for it provides a history of Dominican business, civic, social service, and cultural organizations, and lists important political and cultural leaders.

The most groundbreaking aspect of the book is its discussion of Dominican American culture. Unfortunately, its strongest contribution is also its greatest weakness. In primarily providing biographical sketches of Dominican American artists, the authors miss an opportunity to engage culture as a form of social criticism. Instead, Torres-Saillant and Hernández argue that diasporic culture addresses issues of marginality, racism, and sexism, without letting the artists and artworks speak for themselves. How do diasporic artists – in the imagined world of cultural production – re-articulate what it means to be Dominican? This task is left for future scholars.

Taken as a whole, *The Dominican Americans* argues that the diaspora allows marginalized Dominicans greater access to a public sphere in which they can articulate new versions of Dominican identity. Scholars interested in Dominican immigration should certainly take their cue from this work. New studies, for example, can explore how Dominican men and women cope with the move from a patriarchal society to a more egalitarian one, or how the re-conceptualized – and apparently negrophilic – identity of Dominican migrants is received on the island. Humanists, in turn, might consider how these racial, class, and gender issues play out in the work of Dominican American artists. In the end, the book's clear prose and solid research will appeal to both general readers interested in a new American

subgroup and seasoned scholars interested in issues of transnationalism and globalization.

Maroon Arts: Cultural Vitality in the African Diaspora. SALLY PRICE & RICHARD PRICE. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999. 384 pp. (Cloth US\$ 37.50)

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In academia, where new interests emerge (and disappear) at an increasingly rapid pace, it is rare for anthropologists to devote their career to a particular ethnographic field. Sally Price and Richard Price's long-range, in-depth research on the Saramakas in Suriname is a happy exception. During the past three decades they have produced an impressive series of publications on various aspects of Maroon life. The present book offers a detailed documentation of the development of Saramaka art through time and concludes with a general discussion of the "deep culture-historical roots" of Maroon arts.

The authors argue that Saramaka art has evolved in the New World in an interplay between continuity and change. A syncretic inter-African understanding of aesthetics, which has remained at the core of Maroon artistic expression, first emerged as different Africans came together and shared the same experience of plantation slavery in the New World. A central component of this aesthetic revolves around the importance of creating unique art forms that allow artists to display their particular individuality. The association between identity making and art, the authors suggest, may be related to the Maroons' historical experience of slavery which threatened their identity. Saramakas assert their individuality as artists by being innovative and this involves, among things, continuously adopting new materials, tools, or techniques from the outside. Thus, when Saramaka men began to travel for wage labor after the abolition of slavery in 1863, which allowed them to journey more freely outside their local area, they acquired a number of specialized tools that enabled them to produce more intricate and elaborate forms of woodcarvings than previously. And as Saramaka women were exposed to different forms of cloth and embroidery they created new styles within their textile art. Maroon art forms therefore have undergone constant change as artists have incorporated a wide range of outside elements into their work. This change, however, has been in accordance with a body of

well-defined principles. Maroon cultural history, in other words, has been characterized by "continuity in change, by creative and dynamic processes operating within a general framework of broadly African aesthetic ideas" (p. 302).

The authors conclude the book with a critique of the theory that Saramaka art is directly derivative of African art. This theory is often substantiated with examples of the apparent similarity between select pieces of African and Maroon art. The Prices argue that some of the Saramaka art forms, regarded from this theoretical point of view as being particularly African, are of fairly recent date and therefore cannot derive directly from Africa. Furthermore, they demonstrate that artworks from as disparate parts of the world as Alsace and Timor bear a striking similarity to Saramaka art, even though no contact what-so-ever can be documented. They therefore argue for the need to "go well beyond a look-alike logic and to trace the evolution of Maroon arts in the context of their full social, economic, and cultural settings as they unfolded over time in the New World" (p. 297). Indeed, they state, only such studies can show how Maroon arts "stand as enduring testimony to African-American resilience and creativity and to the exuberance of the Maroon artistic imagination working itself out within the rich, broad framework of African cultural ideas" (p. 308).

The authors' conclusions make an important contribution to the ongoing debate on ethnicity and cultural heritage within and outside the academy in the West, particularly in North America. I wonder, however, whether the authors might not wish to let further analysis of Saramaka art be directed more by ethnographic concerns than by such Western cultural political issues. The authors emphasize that Maroon arts do not have a deeper symbolic significance and they refer to the "tired notion" that insists "the 'meaning' of art in nonliterate societies is a matter of deciphering a symbolic code, typically imagined as one in which sex, fertility, and the supernatural loom large" (p. 8). The authors assert that art and aesthetic commentary, usually focusing on such matters as technique and design, are an integral aspect of Maroon society. Yet reference to the content of this commentary is curiously absent in the book, making one wonder what sort of discussions, and imaginings, occur, for example, in connection with the appropriation of new styles or materials.

We are told that "Maroons have always found it possible to be fiercely anti-European in their outlook yet enthusiastically supportive of creative new cultural ideas developed on their own terms" (p. 293). How does this attitude find expression in their incorporation of European/North American cultural elements into their art? What did the woman intend by sewing her husband's and her own names on her husband's shoulder cape, in the same manner as she probably was taught to do on "European" style samplers at German missionary schools (p. 84)? Similarly, what made a Saramaka

dancer don a rubber mask of Richard Nixon at a dance held at a funeral ceremony in 1961 (p. 244)? What sort of comments might these innovations have engendered? The Prices' enormous contribution to the understanding of Maroon life thus continues to generate new questions which makes one wait, impatiently, for their next study.

The Development of West Indies Cricket. HILARY MCD. BECKLES. Mona, Jamaica: The Press University of the West Indies; London: Pluto Press, 1998. Vol. 1: *The Age of Nationalism*, xx + 236 pp. (Cloth US\$ 59.95, Paper US\$ 24.95). Vol. 2: *The Age of Globalization*, xx + 190 pp. (Cloth US\$ 59.95, Paper US\$ 24.95)

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These are turbulent times for West Indian cricket and, even if reports of its demise are decidedly premature, its recent ups and downs – downs much more than ups – make the appearance of Hilary Beckles's two-volume study of the past, present, and possible future of the game in the Caribbean all the more timely and compelling.

Volume One, subtitled "The Age of Nationalism," is essentially a restatement, already articulated by Beckles in his earlier contributions to *An Area of Conquest* (1994) and *Liberation Cricket* (1995), of the familiar "resistance theory" of Caribbean cricket, according to which the colonial Caliban takes over Prospero's magic, turns it against him and, by dint of defeating him at his own talismanic game, liberates himself from the thrall of foreign hegemony; "liberation cricket" is, in this reading, the vanguard, instrument and expression of political, psychological, and cultural liberation at all levels in the former British Caribbean, the matrix of modern West Indian nationalism and seedbed of its political democracy, with bat and ball, wrested from Massa's hands, now transformed into the *armes miraculeuses* with which, wielded by Headley, Sobers, or Richards or hurled by Constantine, Hall, or Holding, Caliban wreaks revenge for the physical and psychological scourgings of the past. Convinced, following C.L.R. James, that "in the West Indies, history made cricket, and cricket made history," Beckles advances this now well-worn thesis with considerable passion, reading the development of West Indian cricket as a series of "antisystemic resistances" through which "colonized West Indians took the plough share of empire and

turned it into a sword which they later placed at the throats of the imperial order" (pp. 70-71). Beckles is aware of "the dialectical process of accommodation and resistance that resides at the core of Caribbean history" (p. 80), but does not explore in any depth the possible ambiguities of contesting the power of the Master on the Master's own terrain, a process which may involve incorporation into the Master's values and worldview even as it contests them; in Michel De Certeau's terms, West Indian cricket is not so much a strategy of resistance undertaken from outside the Master's hegemony, but a series of oppositional tactics, replete with all kinds of contradiction and paradox, conducted within that hegemony (see De Certeau 1980, Burton 1997). Beckles devotes much attention, rightly enough, to the power struggles between whites and blacks as manifested on and around the cricket pitch, but says nothing of the problematic relations between Afro- and Indo-Caribbeans in West Indian cricket which have, on occasion, led to East Indians boycotting Test matches in Port of Spain and Georgetown (see Birbalsingh & Secharan 1988, Yelvington 1995). There is a valuable chapter on women's cricket in the Caribbean which raises, but does not directly confront, the important issue of whether cricket may have strengthened gender stratification in the Caribbean even as it challenged the hierarchies of race and class, and a discussion of the presentation of cricket in West Indian literature and music is followed by a concluding chapter entitled "The Anti-apartheid Struggle at Home and Abroad" on the troubled cricketing relations with South Africa.

The principal shortcoming of the author's insistently repeated "anti-imperialist" theory is that it confines his discussion almost entirely to international cricket (and principally to matches with England) and leads to his neglecting other levels and forms of cricket in the region: inter-territory cricket, club cricket, schools cricket, village and plantation cricket, street cricket and beach cricket, these last being the basis on which Caribbean cricketing prowess ultimately rests. In pursuing his political and ideological reading of West Indian cricket, Beckles passes over its anthropological meanings, failing, for example, to situate it within the context of the "play element" in Caribbean culture generally and, specifically, within the "reputation culture" of West Indian males that anthropologists such as Peter Wilson (1973) and Roger Abrahams (1983) have explored with such insight. The result is a one-dimensional, even rather puritanical, account of West Indian cricket in which play and pleasure are steadfastly subordinated to ideological self-assertion and political intent whereas, in reality, the two dimensions constitute a single seamless whole. This reader would have welcomed more "thick description" of the grass-roots of West Indian cricket and less talk of "hurling missiles at the Columbus project" (p. 88), but Volume One nonetheless offers a wide-ranging, if hardly original, discussion of what the author calls the first and second paradigms of West Indian

cricket, colonial cricket (ca. 1800-1950) and nationalist cricket (1950-ca. 1990). A fully theorized and anthropologically aware history of West Indian cricket remains, however, to be written.

Volume Two, subtitled "The Age of Globalization," is of considerably greater interest and originality. It represents a first attempt to engage with the "third paradigm" of West Indian cricket, namely, its "post-nationalist" phase beginning in the early 1990s when the West Indies' remarkable fifteen-year domination of world cricket began to falter, pending its apparently total collapse in the disastrous defeats by Pakistan (1997) and South Africa (1998), both of which occurred after the writing of this book. Beckles begins by asserting, perhaps a little prematurely in the light of the West Indies' recent fightback against Australia, that "all around, there is compelling evidence of the collapse of the nationalist sensibility within which West Indies cricket came to an ideological maturity in the Clive Lloyd-Viv Richards era" (p. 1). On the cricket field itself there is the "evidence," if such it is, of the ignominious defeat by Kenya in the 1996 World Cup and the loss of the 1995 series to one of the finest post-war Australian sides. Beyond the boundary, there is the growing popularity amongst West Indian youth of both soccer and basketball, the latter beamed by satellite every evening into tens of thousands of West Indian homes, and the corresponding decline of school and village cricket. Michael Jordan and Dwight Yorke are the new role models for the young West Indian male, and, where cricketers are admired, it is more for their diamond-studded earrings (pp. 13, 21) than for their prowess as batsmen and bowlers; in the new cricketing paradigm they are "apolitical" or "transnational" entrepreneurs rather than sportsmen representing and articulating the democratic-nationalist aspirations of a politically conscious people. Cricketing officials are increasingly recruited from the business milieu, and their aim is to secure global financial sponsorship no matter what the cost to the image of West Indian cricket, whence the proposal – eventually dropped – that the international team be known as the "Kingfisher West Indies." As West Indians transfer their affections to soccer and basketball, so foreigners move in; Chapter 2, "When Kensington Looked Like Lord's," gives a somewhat peeved account of the "invasion" of Kensington Oval by English holiday-makers during the 1994 series against England, which transformed the fourth Test into a virtual home match for the visitors, with no fewer than "89 Union Jacks waving on the first day compared with 12 Barbadian flags and 3 West Indies flags" (p. 39). The impact of what is loosely called "globalization" or "post-modernity" on West Indian cricket is explored insightfully, if somewhat repetitively, in the following chapters, at the end of which the author offers a series of proposals, involving the participation of West Indian governments and the University of the West Indies, geared at strengthening West Indian national cricket (and, by corollary, West Indian

national identity) in the face of the corrosive pressures of, on the one hand, the "subnationalisms" of the region's constituent countries and, on the other, the supranationalism of the age of globalization. The object, of course, is to restore to West Indian cricket its historic role of "resistance," though Beckles is fully aware that what needs now to be "resisted" is far less easily identifiable, and hence far more insidious and menacing, than the British colonialism of old.

Like all such attempts to situate sport within broader socio-economic and political contexts, *The Development of West Indian Cricket* regularly succumbs to what Francis Wheen (1996), in an anthology of "new cricket writing," has called "the athletic fallacy," namely the belief that a successful national team (be it cricket, soccer, rugby, or whatever) necessarily and automatically expresses a strong and secure national psyche and that, conversely, national sporting failure necessarily reflects or presages some crisis of national identity, itself linked to a wider crisis of society, politics, and economy. But, though there are obviously connections between "sport" and "society," these are rarely causative in any straightforward one-to-one fashion, and a nation's success on cricket field or soccer pitch is no necessary indicator of its broader health and security; significantly, England's two brief periods of cricketing supremacy (1926-29 and 1953-58) occurred at times of marked national crisis and uncertainty. *A contrario*, the zenith of the kind of radical nationalism whose apparent demise is bemoaned in this book – say from the Rodney Affair (1968), via the "February revolution" in Trinidad (1970), to the PNP landslide in Jamaica in 1972 – coincided with one of the weakest periods in recent West Indian cricket, while the second half of the *quinze glorieuses* of West Indian cricketing hegemony – say from 1983 to 1990 – took place against the disintegration, precisely, of the "nationalist cosmology" (p. 92) of the 1960s and 1970s. Sport ultimately is an epiphenomenon, and while the development of a particular sport and that of a particular society may at times intersect (as occurred most obviously in 1950 in the case of West Indian cricket), each has its own internal logic and momentum which prevents any neat each-to-each correlation between them. Does the fact that Australia recently failed, against all expectation, to defeat a supposedly supine West Indian side signal some "crisis of Australian identity"? And this is the final paradox of West Indian cricket that Beckles does not – perhaps cannot – address. The West Indies have no mandate from God, History or any other agency to dominate world cricket as, thanks to a combination of factors explainable largely in cricketing terms, they were able to do so brilliantly and ruthlessly between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. The West Indian need for cricketing success – not just to win every series but, apparently, to win every match – may say more about the weakness of the national psyche than about its strength, and the continuing, if waning, obsession with, in particular, defeating the ex-

Master at his own game could indicate how little, rather than how much, West Indians of the nationalist generation have escaped from the colonialist mind-set in which they grew up. Their cricketing omnipotence a thing of the past, the West Indies will in the future win some matches and series and lose others *just like any other national cricketing eleven*, and it will not necessarily affect the wider issues confronting the Caribbean one jot. Perhaps, in short, the time has come for West Indians to be liberated from "Liberation Cricket" as just one further colonial legacy and to transcend the violent swings between hubris and nemesis – both equally illusory – that cricketing nationalists' obsession with victory at all costs has brought in its train.

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Religion, Diaspora, and Cultural Identity: A Reader in the Anglophone Caribbean. JOHN W. PULIS (ed.). Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1999. xi + 417 pp. (Cloth US\$ 90.00)

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This volume brings together the work of fourteen scholars of West Indian religious beliefs and practices. It will be a handy guide for future research, especially since the chapters, taken together, usefully summarize the literature to date on religion in the Caribbean and in Caribbean diasporic communities. The editor is to be commended for providing a sense of coherence to the very disparate case studies presented here. The analytical focus of the book is the formation of West Indian religiosity in the diaspora – and, indeed, as Aisha Khan puts it forcefully in her contribution, of the very idea of religion itself, constructed as a cultural and an analytical domain separate from other domains of social life. Refusing to view Caribbean religion as either made up of timeless traditions or as cut from whole cloth, and resisting temptations to see diaspora as a unidirectional flow from the Caribbean to immigrant communities in North America or to view cultural hegemony as a process emanating from North America southwards, the volume's contributors see diaspora itself destabilizing the traditional/modern dichotomy. Several contributors reveal the utter embeddedness of rational secularism and modernity, with their narratives of progress and development, in dominant Western religious cosmologies, and Caribbean religions' implicatedness in the constitution of specifically West Indian modernities at home and abroad.

The book is divided into two parts. The first contains chapters emphasizing the West Indian diaspora in particular northern locales such as New York City and the Netherlands as well as in dispersed global mediascapes. The second is focused on West Indian communities in the Caribbean, mainly Trinidad and Jamaica. All of the chapters, save Ineke van Wetering's, concern the Anglophone Caribbean and its diaspora. Each part is introduced by a short commentary reviewing the contributions of the chapters that follow – the first by Kenneth Bilby and the second by Carole D. Yawney. The book contains an introductory essay by the editor, and a historical overview of religion in the Caribbean from before the Conquest to the present by Robert J. Steward. The entire volume is framed with a forward by John Szwed and an afterword by Richard Price. Overall, then, the editor has created an impressive package. Its shortcomings include the uneven quality of

the contributions, the inevitable trade-off between maintaining theoretical coherence and striving for encyclopedic scope, and perhaps an over-emphasis on Rastafarianism. But these are the sort of faults one expects in edited collections. Fortunately there are some real gems here that more than suffice to carry the volume.

In Part One, John Homiak criticizes the mapping of the local/global distinction onto scholarly appreciations of Rastafarianism as a "cult" versus a "transnational community and international network of black cultural resistance" (p. 87). His analysis of new media technologies in the formation of a globalized Rastafarian mediascape points up the ever-present "interplay between local developments and global events" (p. 87) that have characterized the movement since its inception. Carole Yawney tracks Rastafarianism from Jamaica to Toronto, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and beyond. Recounting a chant that begins and ends with the phrase "we are only visitors here," Yawney reflects on the ephemerality and "being-in-transition which pervades" not only the Rastafari world but also its scholarly engagements. Philip W. Scher recounts the Crown Heights affair in Brooklyn, which brought the Caribbean and Hasidic Jewish communities into conflict. He argues that city-based policies allocating resources dependent on a community's ability to appear as a single "tile" in a great "ethnic mosaic" demonstrate the resource-competition model of ethnicity to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, not an analytical verity. Wallace C. Zane shows how the Vincentian Spiritual Baptist repertoire, including "travel to different lands" (p. 26) like Africa and Caanan, resonates with their more mundane but no less significant transnational journeys in which the Vincentian Converted demarcate themselves from other Spiritual Baptist communities. Ineke van Wetering demonstrates a similar boundary-maintenance, the result of colonial hierarchies between Creole Surinamese and Ndjuka and Saramaka Maroons which persist in the metropole.

In Part Two, Garth L. Green writes on the controversy surrounding Paul Minshell's 1995 "Hallelujah" float, which brought contending visions of faith and some marginalized Pentecostal congregations a certain degree of public prominence. At the same time, because it centered on Carnival, the debate over Hallelujah became a debate over the character of the nation itself. Stephen Glazier's article on Spiritual Baptist music in Trinidad blurs the analytical boundary between sacred and secular, and troubles the search for "a simple, linear path of development from a single [cultural] source" (p. 278). James Houk's chapter on orisha in Trinidad considers the incorporation of Kabbalistic and other religious traditions in mourning rituals. He situates his chapter in terms of Victor Turner's "communitas/structure" dichotomy. Part Two contains two more essays on Rastafarianism: Barry Chevannes writes on the theological problem posed, for a faith which emphasizes a spiritual "triumph over death" (p. 348), by the passing of

Rastafari heros (a problem resolved by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's mortuary practices); John Pulis discusses "citing-up," a form of scriptural reading in which the textual is subordinated to the spoken. Kenneth Bilby's insightful essay interrogates "community" as a keyword in diverse forms of Jamaican religious belief and practice (Kumina, Convince, and Rastafari), and finds varying configurations of identity and place in the imagined spaces of a specifically West Indian modernity. Diane Austin-Broos's chapter on Pentecostal communities in Jamaica, a taste of her most recent book (Austin-Broos 1997) brilliantly recounts the indigenization of North American Pentecostalism. She shows how the poetics of Pentecostalism provide spiritual and material evidence, for believers, of the poverty of narratives of "history" and "progress" underlying dominant modernities. Finally, Aisha Khan's fascinating interrogation of the analytical category "religion" through ethnographic material from her work among Indo-Trinidadians calls upon us to examine "local determinations of what can be categorized as 'religion,' and why" (p. 249). Defining "religion," then, becomes more a matter of hegemonic cultural practices than universal analytical categories.

Indeed, in their respective foreword and afterword both John Szwed and Richard Price find this volume's main contribution to be its unsettling of some of the received categories of Caribbean studies: syncretism, accommodation, resistance, religion, traditional, modern. In the end, then, this book is about much more than "Caribbean religion" narrowly defined. It is about the enduring problematics of modernity and hegemony through diasporic spaces and temporalities, calling into question the imagined and the real, the transcendent and the mundane.

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Religion and Race: African and European Roots in Conflict – A Jamaican Testament. WINSTON ARTHUR LAWSON. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. xiii + 220 pp. (Paper US\$ 29.95)

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Over the years the often complicated, and sometimes violent, encounters between traditional West African religious cultures and Protestant Christianity in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jamaica has produced a rich historical literature. Lawson's short, and essentially synthetic, study will come as something of a disappointment to those of his readers who are familiar with this literature.

His principal concern is with what he correctly describes as the ongoing interplay of rivaling and often contradictory value systems in the institutional context of Jamaica's Anglican, Baptist, and Methodist churches. The first two chapters of the book, getting on for half his text, are taken up with a discussion of the African origins of syncretism in the Jamaican religious tradition and the theological and historical roots of the island's Protestant churches. Although these chapters provide a necessary background to what follows, they amount to little more than a rehearsal of what to specialist readers will be quite familiar ideas and arguments.

Much the same is also true of the second half of the book, where Lawson focuses his attention on the implications and ramifications of Wilberforce and Buxton's attempts in the early 1820s to secure the amelioration of slavery. Their efforts to effect Parliamentary intervention, he correctly argues, proved to be a pivotal, and absolutely crucial, turning point in the relationship between mainly Anglican slave owners and their mainly Baptist and Methodist bond people. Lawson rightly claims that the contest for power, which occurred both inside and outside their churches, between Afro-Jamaican and Euro-Jamaican Christians that took shape during the 1820s, a very different contest indeed from that which had preceded it, had as one of its most significant outcomes the overt militancy of Native Baptists in the 1830s.

There can be no serious disagreement with the broad outlines of Lawson's argument or with the detail that he provides in support of his case. The main problem is that, rather like his first two chapters, his discussion of the struggles, events, and personalities of the 1820s and 1830s will hold few surprises for those who are familiar with the work of Mary Turner, Gad Heuman, and more recently Robert Stewart. Lawson fully acknowledges the contributions of these scholars but unfortunately he has fallen some way short of

his promise to offer "a new focus on well established data" (p. 2). In fact, there is little that is entirely original or novel about this work. Finally, it would have been helpful had the publisher seen fit to provide an index.

Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830. SYLVIA R. FREY & BETTY WOOD. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. xiv + 285 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95, Paper US\$ 16.95)

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It is refreshing to read a further addition to those texts that treat the transatlantic African world as a continuous culture region that contains as an integral process, the constituting of New World African culture. The book begins with a survey of early Christianity in Africa and especially West Africa in order to put the view that the religions brought by Africans to the New World were already, to some degree, mixed genres that would make their practitioners receptive to new religious modes including New World revivalist Christianity. With these observations the authors place the emphasis where it rightly belongs on New World Africans as cultural creators and innovators rather than simply as bearers or reproducers of culture. Nonetheless, their second chapter focuses on the elements of Old World ritual practice that were retained in the New World, including the obeah, curing, and funeral rites that plantation owners and others would find so distinctive among the slaves. They seek to trace the transition from the modes of leadership involved in these practices to new modes of leadership within Christianity. Central here, it is proposed, were overlaps between forms of African belief and New World evangelical ideas of "instantaneous regeneration" of the person that created a bridge for exponents of African ritual practice in a New World environment. This overlap had been lacking in earlier attempts by the planter-aligned Anglicans to interest slaves in the Christian order.

Frey and Wood adopt a mode of tracing these leadership issues that reflects that their concern is not simply with issues of individual authority, but also with the creation of style in culture – a style that has made "African American Protestantism" a distinctive New World genre. Chapters 5-7

develop the theme of a distinctively New World African Christianity and for this reader constitute the best part of the book. The discussion of the divergences in white and black ecstatic behavior is especially interesting. The authors remark that the Methodist revivals of 1758 in Britain set a precedent for nineteenth-century modes in North America including "groaning and shrieking" and "violent contortions of the body and spasmodic jerkings, rolling and spinning, running and leaping." These ecstatic forms were regarded, however, more as a breach of normative ritual than as integral to a mode of rite. New World African forms, on the other hand, developed out of rhythmic performance – musical, oral or both – that enfolded ecstatic response back into ritual form. This focus on the production of style through the different positioning of practice in different genres of rite allows Frey and Wood to acknowledge the findings of previous literature on European-derived forms of Christian practice – sung psalms and lining-out songs in this case – and yet demonstrate the cultural creativity that was brought to the New World African experience. Their analysis also indicates how much more scope there is for using Christianity, ironically like jazz perhaps, as a central medium for exploring the *Geist* of New World African culture. The book then traces, for the first quarter of the nineteenth century and following the North American Great Revival, the growth of black churches with their emergent cultures both along the North American seaboard and in the British Caribbean. It concludes with a consideration of black Christian practice and family and community life that notes the bias in Protestant practice generally toward condemning the "immorality" of women rather than men, be they black or white Christians. This concluding focus on community allows the authors to raise again those issues of leadership, values, and politics with which the study began and to enter a mild caveat on Protestantism in America as a principal vehicle for mobilization. They refer to "the material as well as the moral costs of embracing evangelical Protestant Christianity" clearly felt by many New World Africans who did not take Christian practice into their cultural repertoire.

An interesting book points to issues for debate or at least to issues for further reflection. I mention a few of these. Although the study is presented as a survey of the American South and the British Caribbean, the Caribbean remains as a fairly shadowy presence in the text. Some hesitancy in presenting the Caribbean scene is suggested by the fact that the Caribbean churches for the period (to 1830) are characterized both as majority black churches led by white pastors and as churches more influenced by African survivals and less by the assimilation modes that infused some American bi-racial churches. What is unremarked is that in the Caribbean practitioners often had multiple affiliations with orthodox Christian groups and with groups that also practiced curing and other rites that derived mainly from an African source. Liele, Baker and their associ-

ates in Jamaica, for instance, were assimilated to a degree into a British Baptist order that stood in a very ambivalent relation to these other practices. It was only following the 1860s when the American Great Revival arrived with force in the Caribbean following that Revival's transport to Britain, that there ensued a process of integrating the different sites of Caribbean ritual practice. This was made possible by the increasing prominence and prevalence of black pastors notwithstanding the British-influenced Revival in the Caribbean. This progress of integration has continued through the twentieth century to produce a distinctive Caribbean variant in New World African Protestantism.

Another issue of considerable complexity concerns the dynamics of initial "conversion" to Christianity. Frey and Wood's study would have benefited from some of the discussions that have taken place on the subject of conversion within African and Caribbean anthropology. Robin Horton and Jean and John Comaroff have canvassed different aspects of Christianization in Africa, particularly the elements of domination and rational response to a changing world. My own work on Jamaican religion has raised the issue of ontology, arguing that as peoples' worlds and oral constitutions of the self shift in response to historical events, so do their ritual responses to and symbolic renderings of life. The processes involved here are not simply ones of domination or resistance, of acts on an intentional plane, but also a question of how the world seems as one generation succeeds another and as practice responds to new environments constituted through orders of power that are never univalent or complete. Tied to this general issue is a more specific one concerning the relation between social organization and ritual practice. Frey and Wood remark that the experience of slavery usually "destroyed the ties of family and kinship" though it did not destroy "memory, beliefs, experience and expertise." Along with their concluding discussion of family and religion, these remarks suggest that they might have taken a closer look at the integration of kinship and ritual practice in both Old World and New World African culture. Certainly the turn to Christianity was linked to the difficulty of sustaining social persona in the New World defined in terms of African kin relations which also informed ritual life. Just as certainly, distinctive styles of New World African rite are engaged in the interrogation of moral injunctions concerning European Christian marriage and notions of family form. Many New World African Christians and especially black women Christians know that their mother-centered family forms are entirely compatible with Christianity and in fact empower them for evangelism.

Finally, I would have liked to see a little more consideration of the relation between the domains distinguished in modernity as "politics" and "religion," respectively. It may be that New World African Christianity can present a very different perspective on how power is negotiated in a racial-

ized world. Tracing the relations between organizational power and ritual practice through stateless and enstated African societies, New World plantation society, and the New World societies of early and late modernity may sensitize us to a fuller range of reasons and cultural contexts in which people distinguish or do not distinguish the domain of religion from politics, and when they do, take up one organizational mode rather than another. Although religious adherence can be indicative of powerlessness, it is not always or only indicative of restricted access to power. If religion can be characterized in terms other than simply a "second best" to politics, its importance to New World African peoples may be better appreciated and new light shed on the over-used domination/resistance dichotomy. These and other interesting issues are raised by this very informative book.

The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana. SIR WALTER RALEGH. Transcribed, annotated and introduced by NEIL L. WHITEHEAD. Manchester: Manchester University Press; Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1997. viii + 232 pp. (Cloth £35/US\$ 37.95, Paper £9.99/US\$ 19.95)

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The publication of a new edition of Walter Raleigh's classic 1596 exploration account of his travels down the Orinocco in search of El Dorado would be a matter for thanks and celebration even without this volume's extra features. The amount of attention being paid to this early work of colonialism, of travel, of courtier strategy, and of ethnography in the last decade or so suggests its importance for many fields – from history, literary history, and criticism to cultural studies, geography, and now anthropology. But the most recent edition dates to the 1940s, and massive research since then into related topics and geographies has stood in serious need of being gathered and appended to a faithful new one. Anthropologist Neil Whitehead's edition is richly annotated and illustrated (with commentary on the illustrations, and new maps), his scholarship impeccable (though he missed the 1596 copy in the John Carter Brown Library), and his interdisciplinary skills awesomely evident.

But what is even more exciting than this necessary and satisfying edition, which will change the study of Raleigh's crucial text and issues related to it in many disciplines, is the book-length monograph which constitutes the Introduction. An important work of scholarship, synthesis, and interpretation itself, it provides both evidence and polemic for new developments in cultural studies, and its value for theory (if word is spread) will be great. Because Whitehead is well-read in recent literary and cultural theory, especially of the "new historicist" varieties (as evidenced by his stimulating critique of the major literary treatments of *Guiana* [1995:53-74]), he is capable of bridging the gap of what sometimes seems like incommensurability between literary and historical or anthropological work on the "same" but of course differently framed topic.

For theorists of representation, especially such consequentially interested representation as reports connected to colonial exploration and settlement, Whitehead's fieldwork in the region discussed by Raleigh will be particularly salient. It would seem that the phantasms of colonialist desire are not alone responsible for such images as El Dorado, Manoa the Golden City, the annual decoration of a chiefly figure with gold dust, the spotting of Sir John Mandeville's headless "Acephali," or Raleigh's promises of gold in the upper reaches of the Caroni and Mazaruni rivers (at the confluence of the Orinoco and Amazon river basins). There seem indeed to have been indigenous goldworks in the area sought after by Raleigh: in the 1990s, goldminers brought to a Guyanese museum a golden pendant in the shape of a two-headed eagle dredged from the mid-Mazaruni. In the Colombia region also discussed as a possible location of "El Dorado," "a *tunjo* recovered from Lake Siecha ... depicts *El Dorado* himself, aboard the raft and surrounded by his retinue, paddled annually to the center of a lake, there to cast in the *tunjos*, as an offering to divinity" (p. 72).

This and masses of other nuanced description of local geography and indigenous trade networks do not, of course, make the case that the alien desires of foreigners don't shape reports and muddy their information value, nor that literary challenges to the credibility, transparency, or usefulness of such texts have been unfounded or themselves unuseful. But Whitehead's account suggests that more nuance will be required in literary and rhetorical analysis to match the carefulness of the anthropological interpretation of this text, and to account for the new light it sheds on the texts that constitute the immediate prehistory of ethnology. The Imaginary is a more multi-dimensional terrain than we had thought.

For historical anthropologists and ethnohistorians, the rigor and care of Whitehead's synthesis of historical and geographical information with textual analysis should provide considerable insight into the complex social actualities of indigenous life in northern South America during the first century of "contact." Raleigh's book is often dismissed by Spanish scholars as

too dependent on the reports of previous Spanish explorers such as Antonio de Berrio to provide significant additions to our knowledge. Whitehead rightly disagrees: "insofar as the *Discoverie* as text emerges from a dialogic encounter between Raleigh and the indigenes of Orinoco it becomes ethnographic in character, and it is this anthropological aspect of the *Discoverie* which justifies ... this present edition" (p. 28). Whitehead's task is to restore the usability of this text, and he sees that careful editing and hermeneutic sophistication are tools as valuable as new archeological evidence and a knowledge of topography. His reading of narratological literary analyses by Louis Montrose and myself enables him to diagnose Raleigh's precise distinctions as "detailed information that Raleigh's drive to narrativity in the *Discoverie* requires" (p. 63). His chain of properly handled resources can open out at last into the addition of a new densely informative resource, the *Discoverie* itself.

For instance, we can place more trust in Raleigh's accuracy if we realize that such "attempts to 'modernize' orthography" as those of the Ramos-Perez Spanish edition (1973) "led to ... a failure to appreciate the significance of Raleigh's observation due to the resulting homogenisation of native terms and the subtle transformations of meaning ... through the hispanisation of geographical terms" (p. 20). Whitehead analyzes the term "*Ezrabetta Cassipuna Aquerewana*," recorded by Raleigh as the name and title by which indigenous people referred to the Queen, whose picture he had shown them. This provides a marvelous instance of the potential ethnohistorical value of the text for those who can read it in a confident and sophisticated way: "the word '*cassipuna*' is an ethnonym that has been associated exclusively with *caribe* populations of the Caribbean, but here Raleigh's implicit reportage reveals to us the continental distribution of this ethnonym and so makes possible a better interpretation of *caribe* and *aruaca* ethnogenesis" (pp. 60-62).

There is not space in this brief review to do justice to the many admirable features of Whitehead's edition (including his incisive critical history of previous major editions in several languages). But I must make one complaint, which I presume reflects upon the publisher and not the author-editor. The volume seems never to have been copy-edited or proofed. This problem of presentation has been growing in both America and Britain, and we will have to keep complaining until the publishing houses take us seriously. It is not only maddening for the reader who must silently correct so much of the text, but in a documentary edition of an early modern work, it may not even be possible to make accurate silent corrections. This is particularly ironic given the revelations this editor's careful reading and research have been able to produce from minimal orthographic changes. So valuable a contribution to scholarship and understanding deserves a cleaner second edition.

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Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750. KRIS E. LANE. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998. xxiv + 237pp. (Cloth US\$ 58.95, Paper US\$ 19.95)

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Pillaging the Empire is a chronological overview of piracy in the Americas between 1500 and 1750. Based neither on original archival materials nor on primary sources, the book is a synthesis of the standard secondary sources on piracy in America and as a result draws heavily on the works of scholars such as Peter Earle, Kenneth Andrews, Charles Boxer, Peter Bradley, Peter Gerhard, Clarence Haring, Robert C. Ritchie, and Marcus Rediker.

Lane criticizes previous pirate histories for having neglected Spain and its colonial subjects and indicates that, although his focus is on the post-conquest enemies of the Spanish and Portuguese in the New World, "the overall subtext is Spanish response" (pp. 6-7). In this respect the book fails, for throughout, it centers on pirates, not the Spanish. The same holds true for the conclusion, where again, the pirate legacy holds center stage instead of that of the Spanish, who are casually written off in the final paragraph with comments to the effect that pirate attacks notwithstanding, Spain continued to build its colonial empire; that in the overall scheme of things, pirate raids were not as significant as some historians have believed; and that despite the fact that the exact cost of piracy can never be known, Spain and its colonies would certainly have been happier and more prosperous without it (pp. 201-2).

Lane is far more successful in his endeavor to place the "seaborne attackers of these Iberian powers in a broader, world-historical context" (p. xvi). The strength of the book lies in its brevity and in the succinct chronological structure that Lane has superimposed on what can otherwise appear as a confusing and inchoate series of heists, raids, and attacks. For all the political and religious motivations often attributed to pirates, Lane sees them as having acted primarily for economic, not nationalistic, reasons.

First to challenge Spanish hegemony in the Americas were French corsairs who sailed between 1500 and 1559. By way of introduction, Lane precedes this episode with a brief treatment of sixteenth-century piracy in the Mediterranean as background to the fact that the French threat in the Americas coincided with the rise in anti-Spanish piracy along the Barbary coast (1530-60). In describing the Mediterranean after the battle of Lepanto (1570) as a hotbed of piracy where *rescate* (ransom) prevailed, Lane has focused on the Trinitarian and Mercedarian religious orders as the middlemen in this operation. In failing to cite Peter Earle's *The Corsairs of Barbary and Malta* (1970), he has overlooked the important role played in the ransom process by Jews.

Part of the impetus for French corsair activity stemmed from Huguenots, who wanted to found colonies in the midst of Spanish and Portuguese territory, especially Florida, through which Spanish treasure galleons passed en route from Havana to Spain. Interestingly, an expedition to expel French corsairs, who wanted to trade for dyewood led to the Portuguese founding of Brazil in 1533. Nevertheless, much of the anti-Spanish piracy of this early period took place closer to Europe than to America. Between 1535 and 1547, although Spain lost sixty-six ships to French corsairs, forty-one were taken in the Atlantic triangle off the Spanish coast.

Under the Elizabethans, the center of piracy moved from the Old World to the New where, during 1559-68, individual English merchants challenged Spain's monopoly trade by smuggling slaves; in the period 1568-85, outright pirates including Sir Francis Drake challenged Spanish commercial and bullion fleets; and between 1585 and 1603, open warfare featured unprecedented levels of officially commissioned English privateering. In response, the Spanish were forced to fortify such Caribbean ports as Havana, Cartagena, and San Juan de Puerto Rico, whose defenses were funded through higher local taxes.

After the death of Elizabeth I, the British were overshadowed by Dutch sea rovers whose activities represented an outgrowth of Holland's struggle for independence from Spain and Portugal (1580-1648). This struggle was given economic urgency because Dutch herring fishermen needed salt which the Portuguese at Setúbal refused to sell them. When their attempts to exploit the salt pans of the Cape Verde islands were rebuffed, the Dutch challenged Spain at Punta de Araya on the Northeast coast of Tierra Firme.

During this period both the war and the piracy were on again off again. The first serious threat posed by the Dutch came with their capture of Brazil in 1630, which they held until 1654, but their sustained efforts to attack Spanish settlements off the Pacific coast of Chile, Peru, and Mexico proved more costly in the long run.

The final three of Lane's six chapters are devoted to the buccaneers and their offshoots, "freebooters." Lane associates the rise of the buccaneers with both the political and economic decline of Spain and the advent of Cromwell and Louis XIV. The buccaneers illegally founded the first permanent non-Spanish bases in the Caribbean at Tortuga, Jamaica, and St. Thomas. The 1650s and 1660s were the heyday of commissioned buccaneering out of Jamaica in ways reminiscent of the manner in which Barbary corsairs obtained "commissions" from the local *beys* of the Ottoman empire. Such was the strength of their force that in the Treaty of Madrid (1670), the Spanish finally agreed to recognize English holdings in the Caribbean. But, the height of this success would also spell the beginning of the end for buccaneers whose acts of piracy constituted a danger to the colonies that England was trying to establish. The buccaneers' demise, usually said to have occurred in 1697 with the sack of Cartagena by the French, was preceded by thirty years of vacillation where colonial governments claimed, on the one hand, to suppress them and, on the other, actively encouraged them. The fact that, after 1677, pirates could be executed in British overseas courts and were prevented from sailing under foreign flags as privateers without permission from their home governments caused the buccaneers to push from the Caribbean into the South Seas and to begin raiding the commerce of their own nationals. Buccaneers not driven to the South Seas took their enterprises off the eastern seaboard of British North America, where merchants, during the 1680s and 1690s, defied British colonial policy to trade with them in such ports as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. The War of the Spanish Succession (1702-13) afforded one last opportunity for buccaneers to legitimize themselves as privateers. Thereafter, the 1710s and 1720s would witness the last gasp of piracy in the Caribbean under such independent freebooters as William Kidd and Blackbeard, until English property law, pressure from the East India Company, and British suppression campaigns, more than Spanish military resolve, finally completed their extermination.

Pillaging the Empire will provide helpful background information for anyone trying to understand or prepare a course on piracy in the Americas, and I wish I had had such a resource for my own past endeavors. As a bare bones account, much of the colorful and idiosyncratic detail of the various episodes has been lost, and thus, the book could not stand alone as reading material for an entire course. Ironically, the colorful detail it presents focuses almost exclusively on the Holy War and the anti-Catholic actions of

largely Protestant pirates, detail usually not found in general pirate histories. In 1579, for example, a member of Drake's band, participating in the desecration of a chapel, broke a crucifix against a table and proclaimed the Spanish to be not Christians, but "idolators who adore sticks and stones" (p. 48); in 1586, when attempts by Thomas Cavendish's men to pull down a large wooden cross overlooking a bay failed, the Catholics, as is often their wont, saw a miracle and began selling splinters of it as relics (p. 54); and in 1680, one of Bartholomew Sharp's men shot a friar, who, regarded simply as one more mouth to feed, was jettisoned while still alive (p. 136). Nevertheless, the book is so simply and straightforwardly written that undergraduates could use it to provide chronological linkage of one pirate episode to another, and thus, I recommend it for undergraduates and general readers alike.

A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean. DAVID BARRY GASPAR & DAVID PATRICK GEGGUS (eds.). Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997. xiii + 262 pp. (Cloth US\$ 35.00)

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Two social historians who are specialists of slave cultures in the early colonial Caribbean, along with six other contributors, have produced an interesting and somewhat innovative volume on the region in the age of democratic revolutions. With reason and *en connaissance de cause*, David Geggus observes in a solid, comprehensive chapter that nowhere else in the Americas did the French Revolution have such a strong impact, and that as well as (if no more than) the arrival of subversive ideas with shipments, it was the collapse of colonial institutions along with that of political authority that offered new spaces to free coloreds and slaves. *A Turbulent Time* sets out to explore the variety of strategies and the difference in aims and magnitude that characterized these "slave rebellions and conspiracies, 1789-1815." (The very useful synoptic list of these rebellions and conspiracies on pp. 46-49 would have been enhanced by a map.) The space charted by these social movements is what Gaspar and Geggus term appropriately "Greater Caribbean": not only the Antilles, large and small, but also the Caribbean fringes of the continental Americas, from Venezuela and

New Granada to Louisiana and Florida. Indeed, almost half of the book deals with Florida, which was Spanish at the time.

The view that export trade based on plantation agriculture (and with it, all sorts of currents and relations established between the islands and the lands surrounding them) was the primary factor during the eighteenth century in shaping a new cultural sphere – that of the Greater Caribbean – is strongly corroborated by this reviewer's own research (Estrade & Pérotin-Dumon 1991). Gaspar and Geggus's volume amply illustrates its validity, in particular by locating in this Caribbean framework of slavery, trade, and revolution the Spanish colonial empire, its continental outposts and islands mostly with incipient plantation economies. The chapters on the Spanish-American Caribbean slaves bring some of the newest perspectives on Caribbean slave rebellions. One such is Jane Landers's essay on the way Florida's maroon leaders (some of whom were veterans from the war of St. Domingue-Haiti, on the royalist side) negotiated their status as free persons against their loyal participation in the continuous Seminole wars. As in Kimberly Hanger's discussion of the free people of color of New Orleans, we are led to grasp complex and versatile situations and the way slaves made the best of it to obtain their liberty in principle and in fact, whether they had to take the revolutionary or the royalist side of the whites to do so.

A keen awareness that this "turbulent time" was one of war is another aspect that commends the volume to our attention. This is made clear by the introductory remarks as well as in a number of contributions, including Gaspar's on the *guerre des bois* waged in St. Lucia in the 1790s and Geggus's on the turn Jean Kina's career as an English soldier took in the early 1800s. To borrow Richard Pares's classic title, "war and trade" was replaced by revolution and war. Military history is a British tradition and the editors have mustered some of the finest British military historians. The chapter by Michael Duffy offers an analysis of the outcome of this shift from trade to revolution: having by and large won a century-long fight with the French over a Caribbean sugar empire, Great Britain opted for a different kind of imperialism altogether in the Caribbean, more market-oriented than territorial.

It can be argued that revolution brought along the militarization of Caribbean rebellions (those that took place in Martinique and Tobago in the early 1800s are cases in point), as well as their shift from the plantation to the cities. After all, it was in the cities that rising colored militias had steadily concentrated in the second half of the previous century, in the three colonial empires. One would have liked a closer look to be taken at the urban experience *per se* of slaves to assess precisely that shift of slave rebellions from the plantation to the city. This volume leaves also for a future one the task of redefining the nature of war experience so as to encompass the female side of it and documenting the changing if not increasing contrast

between the genders at work in the slave culture at that time. But one should judge the merits of a book according to what it promises to deliver: *A Turbulent Time* accomplishes the task its authors set for themselves by increasing both in depth and scope our understanding of the Caribbean connections between rebellions and revolutions. One incidental remark, however: several authors call the slogan "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*" revolutionary, but this is an anachronism, the three words having been coined as the *devise* of the Republic late in the nineteenth century. During the French Revolution, the official letterhead reads, first, "*Liberté, la Nation, la Loi*" and subsequently, "*Liberté, Egalité, la Loi*," while "*Salut et fraternité*" became the usual way to close letters.

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The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography. LOUIS A. PÉREZ, JR. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. xvi + 171 pp. (Cloth US\$ 34.95, Paper US\$ 16.95)

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In this fascinating book, Louis Pérez explores the connections between dominant historical narratives, popular memory, and official discourse regarding the 1898 U.S. military intervention in Cuba's war for independence against Spain. Arguing that the meaning of 1898 remains largely ambiguous, Pérez proposes that this ambiguity is incredibly instructive. In fact, he contends, North Americans have consistently vested their renderings of the story of 1898 "with the ideals by which [they] wished to define and differentiate their place in the international system." Serving as a means by which to affirm "what the nation is, or perhaps more correctly

what the nation thinks itself to be," discussions of 1898 changed as political circumstances changed over time (p. x).

Critically, Pérez reveals the *process* by which the consciousness of both historical actors and historians evolved with the ebb and flow of their own need to rationalize and justify the contradictions of U.S. policies. He thus demonstrates how notions such as insular "stability" and "pacification" underwent repeated redefinition. As U.S. officials rushed to staunch the hemorrhaging of Cuba's sugar economy at the hands of rebels, they sought desperately to fend off charges that they operated by the same "imperialist impulse" then overtaking Europe (pp. 30-39). As Pérez aptly shows, deep-seated racism and a desire to impede Cubans from attaining complete sovereignty over Cuba underlay the stated objectives of U.S. officials. In disguising the self-interest behind U.S. manipulation of Cuban struggles, U.S. politicians and officials relied on a humanitarian discourse that found an abiding resonance in the annals of historians (see pp. 45-56). But, Pérez notes, the combination of fact and fantasy which found its highest expression in North American accounts of the U.S.S. *Maine's* 1898 explosion also gave rise to a number of silences.

In the book's exciting fourth chapter ("Constructing the Cuban Absence"), Pérez examines the hidden meaning behind one such silence: the discursive disappearance of Cubans from North Americans' depictions of the War and its aftermath. Not only did U.S. policy-makers seek to cover-up their military's incompetence by depicting both Cubans and Spaniards as more incompetent; they also sought to prevent Cubans from participating in their own liberation by banishing them from the front-lines and relegating them to the role of by-standers during negotiations for peace. The purpose of this was to spare contemporaries and their chroniclers the burden of having to act (or think) in a manner consistent with democratic principles. Ironically, Pérez's best efforts to illuminate the complexity of contradictions in which North Americans' perceptions of 1898 are ensnared only reveals more contradictions – itself a commendable achievement.

While this book is brilliant, it is also somewhat disappointing. Certainly, it represents a departure from most of Pérez's previous work which relies heavily on a narrative style and even more heavily on materialist, rather than discursive, modes of analysis. The combining of the two methods for this book is highly laudable. But Pérez remains mute on the question of how his own perspective and political moment influence his rendering of 1898: odd silences permeate his analysis. For instance, although Pérez claims that his primary inspiration for the book comes from Cuban historiography (p. xi), he cites almost no works written or published by Cubans. Indeed, those which Pérez does cite were, on the whole, published prior to 1959. Although the book's objective is to examine the relationship between U.S. historiography and policy, one is left to wonder how the anti-imperialist works of

Cuban historians of the Republic related to Cuba's Republican state (pp. 125-26). Moreover, while Pérez does acknowledge how profoundly the 1959 Revolution affected Cuban perceptions of 1898, he ends his discussion of its impact with 1961 (pp. 126-33). At this point, Pérez remarks, Cubans came to a consensus that 1898 was a symbol of how U.S. imperialism had stolen the promise of liberation from them. But since 1961 the Cuban state initiated policies of centralization and control of information that undoubtedly affected the story's telling all the more. Thus, it seems a curious omission for Pérez to avoid the questions of how Cubans perceived 1898 after 1961 and how memory and the evolving nature of Cuban officialdom changed over time.

Finally, Pérez excludes both historians and actors whose views resist the myths he analyzes. For instance, Philip Foner, who made many of Pérez's same arguments much earlier (1972), is mentioned only in passing (pp. 78, 131). Walter LaFeber, at one point considered a maverick for his deconstruction of U.S. foreign policy objectives, is entirely absent. Additionally, Pérez depicts the U.S. military as monolithic in its advocacy of racist, exploitative objectives. In fact, the War of 1898 was distinctive for the large number of African-Americans who fought in U.S. ranks. As North Americans who had an entirely different view of the largely black Cuban forces and their cause of freedom, these soldiers have been the subject of various works, including that of James Guthrie (1899), a collection of letters (Gatewood 1972), and several recent essays (Kaplan & Pease 1993). Indeed, only by understanding alternative, even marginalized narratives of history and memory can we fully understand the internal contradictions of hegemonic ones – or discover how and why they got that way.

Overall, Pérez skillfully raises the issue of how "truths" – historical, remembered, or imagined – are always multiple and usually mercurial. His book is an exciting contribution to Latin American and U.S. historiography.

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Montpelier, Jamaica: A Plantation Community in Slavery and Freedom, 1739-1912. B.W. HIGMAN. With contributions by GEORGE A. AARONS, KARLIS KARKLINS & ELIZABETH J. REITZ. Kingston: The Press University of the West Indies, 1998. xv + 384 pp. (Paper US\$ 40.00)

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This prize-winning work focusing on a single Jamaican plantation from its establishment in the eighteenth century to its demise in the twentieth is the culmination of an ambitious research project B.W. Higman has been conducting and coordinating over the past quarter-century or more. Although the author has been whetting our appetites through the years with occasional essays and papers on aspects of the study, his monograph is a tour de force that realizes our highest expectations and cements his position in the first rank of Caribbean scholars. In awarding its 1999 Elsa Goveia Book Prize to *Montpelier*, the Association of Caribbean Historians cited the “masterly portrait of the life (and death) of a historic Jamaican community [that] brilliantly deploys a wide range of approaches and techniques to illuminate the lifeways and material culture of Montpelier’s people.”

Slave labor created Jamaica’s booming sugar economy in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when Montpelier developed as one of the island’s premier plantation complexes, a holding of some 10,000 acres in western Jamaica with hundreds of enslaved Africans and African-Jamaicans (reaching 958 by 1817) attached to its two sugar estates at Old and New Montpelier, and the pen at Shettlewood. Slave rebellion (1831-32), emancipation (1834), and full freedom (1838) devastated Montpelier’s sugar economy – production had ceased entirely by the 1850s – and the subsequent, much-diminished agricultural enterprise shut down in the early twentieth century.

Higman ably chronicles the entire two-hundred-year life-course of the plantation, but weights his analysis to reflect the primacy of sugar and slavery – the sine qua nons of Montpelier’s existence, in an era that left both the best documentation and the richest archeological record. He evinces characteristic thoroughness in assembling disparate and diverse sources (manuscript materials, maps and plans, government documents, primary and secondary printed works, as well as results of excavations conducted over the

past twenty-five years) and remarkable facility in crafting them into an insightful, erudite narrative reconstructing plantation village life.

After a brief introductory chapter on the history and archeology of plantations in the Americas, Higman spends two chapters on Montpelier's establishment, ownership, population and production, and a third detailing the plantation's operation and spatial organization. The following three chapters, analyzing in turn family villages, village architecture and villagers' possession, derive their particular strength from the rich trove of archeological findings (to which Tony Aarons, Karlis Karklins, and Elizabeth Reitz made important contributions) and an extensive documentary record. Chapter 8 shifts focus and tone in examining, within the broader Jamaican context, the resistance by Montpelier's slaves and freedpeople that found its most overt expression in the Baptist War of 1831-32. Higman's thoughtful and thought-provoking final chapter, "People and Place," seeks to locate "a concept of community ... for the people who occupied the plantation space of Montpelier" (p. 290) in terms of locality, kinship, language, values and reciprocity.

The text is supported by three appendices, including revealing analyses by Reitz and Karklins respectively of the vertebrate fauna and beads excavated at Montpelier, as well as numerous tables and figures, but the muddy reproduction of a few of the latter, for example the Baptist War map (figure 8.1), somewhat diminishes their value. Higman's notes, bibliography, and index are, as usual, exemplary. This handsomely-produced volume is a notable addition to the already prestigious catalogue of The Press University of the West Indies.

Recent contributions in slavery scholarship have been directing attention to the extraordinary vitality of slave community life and to the strength of slave culture, as the millions of men and women who lived and died in bondage throughout the Americas confronted the grim circumstances of their coercion and forged worlds of their own. *Montpelier* substantiates and advances these historiographical developments as Higman links intricate analyses of the slaves' material lives – their houses, furnishings and possessions, clothing and bodily adornments, and dietary patterns – to a detailed reconstruction of family and household structures, that confirms the existence of "an autonomous slave culture ... rooted in a dynamic community" (p. 2), in contrast to the "parasitic dependence" (p. 305) that characterized the white residents' role. Although emancipation doomed Montpelier's villages, aspects of community life accompanied the freedpeople in their forced or voluntary relocation beyond the plantation's boundaries, and gave shape to an enduring African-Jamaican culture. These conclusions suggest directions for future research. For example, the collection of oral testimony (which interestingly was not part of Higman's project) could help locate the twentieth- (and twenty-first-) century legacies of

a culture whose birth in the oppressive conditions of plantation slavery is portrayed so cogently in *Montpelier*.

Espace et identité à la Martinique: Paysannerie des mornes et reconquête collective (1840-1960). CHRISTINE CHIVALLON. Paris: CNRS Editions, 1998. 298 pp. (Paper 185 FF)

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Espace et identité à la Martinique reveals a century of social history which had previously been omitted, forgotten, or even denied – that of a Martiniquan peasantry. Basing her research on encounters with small farmers in the northern part of the island and retracing the history of the acquisition and use of land, Christine Chivallon argues that in the period immediately after the abolition of slavery, an economic alternative to the plantation system was already operating, opening the way to the development of a true peasantry.

The book focuses on the period from 1840 to 1960, during which the economic and social structures of this peasantry were formed. Chivallon consulted archival sources (the land registry, titles to property, notarized deeds, and the civil registry) and compared the information they yielded to the oral histories she collected. As a result, she was able to trace the demographic and property-owning evolution of three communities: Basse-Pointe, Rivière-Pilote, and Morne-Vert.

She demonstrates that land was purchased by means that were fully legal and aboveboard. Forged by the plantation system, the freedmen were conscious of the value of owning property and the inviolable status legal ownership conferred upon it. For example, the appropriation of the Caplet district of Morne-Vert was accomplished by the purchase of 7.5-acre parcels between 1870 and 1880, following the break-up of the plantations. Elsewhere, properties were of smaller size. These agriculturalists had worked on the plantations as paid laborers, but had also been able to save enough to accumulate nest eggs from the sale of produce from kitchen gardens or by plying a trade. The purchasers appear to have been pioneers motivated by “a will to break away, prepared to take advantage of the tiny loopholes remaining in a power system no less totalitarian than in the pre-

abolition era" (p. 83). They were operating on the basis of a firm conviction that land represented "a source of nourishment; the only guarantee of survival, of a future free of insecurity; as a resource, the land confers upon its owner control of the economic function; as a symbol of belonging to a world, the land confers lasting settlement in a certain place" (p. 83). Even today, when families recount their histories, they refer to a collective memory of genealogies related to the purchase of land, of the pioneers who settled in the area where they were brought up. Chivallon depicts a general process in which the presence of traditional plantations until 1860-80 was followed by the freedmen's purchase of land parcels, created by the division of plantations and offered for sale by the former owners or their agents, thus forming the agricultural districts (p. 90). This social dynamic was based on "the principles of hierarchization and accumulation" (p. 98), not upon "an egalitarian, communal construction," although a highly structured mutual aid system did exist.

The property base has developed the family and the constitution of a heritage. Today the family structure in the hills is nuclear (which throws doubt upon the theory of matrifocality), whether the marriages are legitimate or common-law unions, so that property is usually transmitted from generation to generation in the paternal line. To avoid excessive pressure on the land, co-heirs generally move away or agree on some other arrangement. This strategy has made it possible to maintain a family property heritage without breaking up parcels which were already small.

The aim of the organization was "to protect, guarantee, and perpetuate a self-sufficient economy" (p. 236). In fact, outside of the context of the plantation, the freedmen planned and developed a garden-produce farming operation which supplied its own commercial circuits. The situation was in direct conflict with the interests of the plantation: peasant farming diverted labor from the plantation and competed with it for the appropriation of the space; furthermore, its trading was not based on the exportation of agricultural products and the importation of consumer goods (p. 154). The planters therefore demanded coercive measures to protect themselves from this competition. To circumvent the legislation, the small farmers adopted a strategy of compromise, engaging in several different activities. They would work as laborers on the plantation during the cane-cutting season or as merchants (p. 158). Nevertheless, food-growing lands decreased decade by decade, while lands cultivated for cash crops grew (p. 176).

This book demonstrates that a Martiniquan peasant class did indeed exist, contrary to previous assertions. It throws doubt upon theories of "non-history" or victimhood which fed the rhetoric on alienation, assimilation, and the dispossession of identity. There is now no doubt about the construction of a social structure following the abolition of slavery, with small farmers constituting their own autonomy and endowing themselves with the necessary legal, technical, and economic means. This is indeed a case

of a collective repossession of the land and its means of production in a space freed up by the plantation.

As she explicitly states, Chivallon chose to find out the "regularity" and "stability" operating within the social organization afforded by the practice of farming (p. 33). Her aim, in conducting ethnographic interviews, was to reconstruct the physical geography of the districts and their history in relation to family history, economic organization (farming methods and mutual-aid systems), and the "farming cosmogony." Nevertheless, this reader would have appreciated more details about the agriculturalists' daily life, yearly routines, and so on.

The study changes the historical perspective on property and territoriality in Martinique. The hills were transformed into a home, a dwelling, thus becoming a source of collective identity. "The land is for producing and expressing" (p. 191). At a time when assertions of "nomadic identity" are fashionable, this research fills the breach opened by certain ethnologists who have made studies of territoriality and the production of collective identities with a historical basis (see Benoît 1989, Dubost 1996). It is unfortunate that Chivallon's discussion on this point engages only the writings of Édouard Glissant and Francis Affergan.

In this book, the paradigm of the appropriation of space as a producer of identity is applied to a specific experience – that of economic, spatial, social, and symbolic self-affirmation (p. 239). This experience reveals "the tonality of an identity destined entirely to be localized" (p. 239), without limiting it to that. Here dwells "diversity, due not to a collage or jumble of influences, yet nevertheless unique, but rather due to the multiplicity of ways that people situate themselves in the world" (p. 239).

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In Place of Slavery: A Social History of British Indian and Javanese Labor in Suriname. ROSEMARIJN HOEFTE. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998. xii + 275 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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During the final weeks of the ten-year "apprenticeship" program in June 1873 that marked the formal end of slavery, the first shipload of Asian Indian (locally called "Hindustani") indentured laborers arrived in Suriname, the beginning of a sustained labor migration from colonized Asia to the Dutch Caribbean colony. All in all, 34,304 laborers were recruited from British-occupied India through 1916 and another 32,962 from Dutch-controlled Java between 1890 and 1939. Focusing particularly on Suriname's largest sugar estate, Mariënborg, Hoefte's study surveys the experiences of these Asian migrant laborers and the laws and conditions guiding their migration and livelihood from the 1870s to the 1930s.

As in neighboring British and French colonies, Suriname's planters posed abolition and indentured migration as intricately connected issues. After a series of small-scale, private, and generally unsuccessful initiatives to contract laborers from China, Madeira, the British West Indies, and Africa, the Dutch government reached "an imperial deal" with British officials in 1872 that swapped territorial claims in Africa and Asia and also authorized the recruitment of laborers in India for Suriname (p. 31). And once the powerful *Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij* (NHM-Dutch Trading Company) became involved in Suriname, most notably in its purchase of Mariënborg in 1880, Dutch officials in The Hague and Batavia (Jakarta) relented to planters' appeals for government subvention to defray transportation costs and the right to recruit laborers from the Dutch East Indies.

Modeled after the British system, indentured labor migration to Suriname included exacting regulations on contract terms, recruitment methods, sex ratios, and laboring conditions, ostensibly designed to protect the rights of workers. But the entire system, as Hoefte makes it clear, was liable to violation and abuse by recruiters and employers. Recruiting agents and sub-agents, for example, avoided mentioning the penal sanction of labor contracts in Suriname and planters, in turn, resorted constantly to the criminal courts to discipline and punish indentured laborers. The laborers, on the other hand, held the legal right to file complaints against their employers, but faced formidable obstacles in doing so. In addition to language and cul-

tural barriers, they were obliged to obtain a pass from the plantation management first. The state, Hoefte argues, reflected the contradictions inherent to the indenture system, including the patent discrepancy between legal mandates and everyday realities. District commissioners, who stood as the workers' immediate protectors, for example, also acted as their prosecutors.

In drawing these observations and conclusions, Hoefte places her work firmly in line with past studies that have highlighted the exploitative aspects of indentured labor migration. For instance, gendered wage rates, sexual harassment, and uxoricide, she argues, must be taken into account in assessing the degree to which migration afforded women a path to social liberation. Indentured labor migration, through its legal and ideological structures, translated into unequal social relations where Hindustani and Javanese laborers, particularly the women, found themselves at the bottom of the plantation hierarchy with few avenues for upward mobility.

In spite of the preponderance of planter power, according to Hoefte, Asian migrants expressed their discontent, protest, and aspirations in a number of ways. Malingering, suicide, arson, desertion, and violence against plantation authority – both individual and collective – were persistent features of the indenture system and ethnically conscious political movements attracted a growing body of Hindustani and Javanese residents in the twentieth century. Perhaps the most persistent source of conflict centered around definitions of tasks and wages that sometimes boiled over into mass uprisings, as described in the last chapter. Yet more than “incidental violence” that “did not challenge the system of exploitation,” Hoefte concludes, acts of “less open resistance” characterized Asian migrants' response to indentureship. The high volume of cases before the courts for contract violations provided “the best proof of persistent dissent” (pp. 200, 202).

Hoefte divides her chapters thematically, discussing summarily the migration systems, demographic changes, government institutions, plantation hierarchy, working conditions, socio-cultural traditions and adaptations, and workers' resistance over the entire period of Asian migration. Her extensive presentation of population figures, wage rates, real property valuations, hospital costs, and other statistical information attests to the impressive array of documents she has examined. Hoefte's interpretive approach, however, limits her inquiry into historical processes and contexts and what emerges in the end, above all else, is a series of snapshots of how plantation and government officials viewed and treated Asian migrants. An explanation of what the Muharram festival meant to Suriname's peoples or an analysis of the colony's political framework, for example, seem necessary in understanding the significance of the various protest movements Hoefte describes in the last two chapters. The overall result is an interesting profile of compelling subjects whose struggles warrant further investigation.

Insurrection and Revolution: Armed Struggle in Cuba, 1952-1959. GLADYS MAREL GARCÍA-PÉREZ. Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998. xiii + 138 pp. (Cloth US\$ 40.00)

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This chronicle of the threshold years of the Cuban Revolution, focusing on Matanzas province, is a welcome addition to research on a period when the revolution took shape in lasting ways. García-Pérez argues that the Sierra Maestra guerrillas were only the military wing of a broader revolution that turned preponderantly rural, martial, and centralist in 1957-58, as urban student and worker militance fizzled out or was crushed by the Batista regime in provincial cities across Cuba. The 26th of July Movement, "as a party giving form to a consolidated underground under a decentralized command in provinces, regions, and municipalities, with a powerful network all over the island, was converted into a structure of civil-military support for the rebel army" (p. 99). Until 1958, the M-26-7 countenanced armed insurrection only in the context of a national general strike. The *Movimiento's* change in strategy came about as a result of the failure of "insurrections" on all fronts: the tragic students' assault on the presidential palace, March 1957; the failed naval rebellion of September 1957, with M-26-7 participation, which ended in a massacre of more than three hundred; and the disastrous general strike, April 1958.

García-Pérez's argument overlaps with others who recognize the weakening of various anti-Batista sectors by 1958, yet who denounce Castro for capitalizing on, or indeed planning this scenario (e.g., Banachea & San Martín 1974). García sketches a broader, regionally-strong, and popularly-based anti-Batista resistance with deep roots in Cuban history, which contextualized the M-26-7 (somewhat along the lines of Morán 1980, though Morán's account turns more on Santiago de Cuba). García contends that the *fidelistas* gained national support in 1957-58 because they represented the last hopes of the broad anti-Batista milieu – which of course had also partially shaped the *barbudos* themselves. Castro led the Ortodoxo student youth and admired Eduardo Chibás, the legendary Ortodoxo leader. The Moncada assault in 1953 was to signal mass insurrection by broadcasting

over the radio Chibás's most famous speech. "In political terms, Castro simply recovered the popular basis of the Chibás program and different forms of grassroots action" (p. 66).

And of course, the Sierra Maestra guerrillas were not simply of military character; they were of civilian origin and their mode of operation had a specific logic that jumbled distinctions between civilian and military. The guerrillas, that is to say, were hardly the product of a military uprising; for these, too, failed against Batista. Many of the guerrillas were men from Oriente who had been trained by Frank País in the M-26-7 underground and remained loyal to País until his assassination in 1957. García-Pérez is persuasive in demonstrating that distinctions between the civil and military wings of M-26-7 were often a matter of time and space, and should not be confused with the larger political and historical meanings that were in flux.

While García-Pérez locates her account firmly in the national context (sometimes too much so), her sights are set on Matanzas: we learn, for instance, about Dr. Mario Muñoz, the first leader of M-26-7 in Matanzas, active in opposition since Batista's first coup in the 1930s, and a key participant in the Moncada assault. Or Joaquín "Quino" Torres, of the huge, American-owned La Rayonera textile mill, who led the 26th of July workers section in Matanzas (p. 49); or Enrique Hart Dávalos, less well-known than his brother Armando, who led the bank workers trade union, later became a key 26th of July underground figure in Matanzas, and met an early death (p. 52); or Leonor Arestuche and Ida Fernández, who joined the M-26-7 youth brigade that engaged in sabotage; or any of the dozens of workers, students, and middle-class people whom García-Pérez is at pains at least to name.

We also learn about forgotten, inventive varieties of sabotage and conspiracy in Matanzas: setting canefield fires by throwing ping-pong balls filled with chlorate and sulphuric acid from passing cars; stealing the gear levers from urban buses; the *picapostas*, utility-pole cutters; the hiding of grenades behind a Matanzas church altar ... García-Pérez clearly wishes to break the hold that a few major figures, and one major strategy, has had on our *imaginario* of the Cuban Revolution.

Insurrection and Revolution may be the first "revisionist" interpretation of the Revolution to come out of Cuba by an author living in Cuba, a researcher at the Institute of History and the Center for Martí Studies. The book revives an important discussion, not undertaken by a major publishing house in twenty-five years. It is also pathbreaking in its use of interviews of local and regional leaders as well as judicial and police archives at the provincial level, all indispensable sources for reappraisals of the Revolution.

The book's catchy title, it turns out, is misleading. There is a far less linear relationship between "insurrection" and "revolution" in 1950s Cuba than the title suggests (see, similarly, Bonachea & San Martín 1974). The book is less about insurrection and armed struggle than about diverse, inchoate, civil

forms of resistance that only momentarily, if ever, coalesced into a single revolutionary movement in 1958-59. Other difficulties in the book may stem from its brevity. One misses a discussion of works on the Cuban 1950s and the coming of the Cuban Revolution; the more concentrated and significant studies on the topic are not so numerous as to discourage consideration, and their arguments are close enough to García-Pérez to warrant her perusal (Bambirra 1974; Bonachea & San Martín 1974; Winocur 1979; Morán 1980). And of course, one would like to read more than names and schematic profiles of regional leaders, and more on rank and file members and women. Race, too, seems oddly absent from García-Pérez's account, even though Matanzas is probably the province with the strongest Afro-Cuban presence.

On the whole, García-Pérez raises important questions that stimulate further research. Her answers remain, perhaps fruitfully, ambiguous. The Sierra Maestra guerrillas capitalized on previous popular, civilian movements; at the same time, Castro brought anti-Batista forces victory, such as could be had, in the real world and in the shadow of the American empire; and the Sierra Maestra guerrillas struck a quick victory in the lowlands due to the vacuum left by the defeats of 1957-58. We may speculate as to the import of *Insurrection and Revolution* for current U.S.-Cuban-Cuban exile relations. But clearly García-Pérez's focus on the Cuban Revolution's multiple origins and dimensions, and on its more local levels, stimulates and enriches debate on the Revolution and prods it in directions that challenge the conventional wisdom of both its supporters and critics.

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The Haitian Dilemma: A Case Study in Demographics, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy. ERNEST H. PREEG. Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1996. xiv + 133 pp. (Paper US\$ 14.95)

Haiti Renewed: Political and Economic Prospects. ROBERT I. ROTBERG (ed.). Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press; Cambridge MA: The World Peace Foundation, 1997. xiii + 245 pp. (Cloth US\$ 28.95)

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The study by Preeg analyzes Haiti in the 1990s from the standpoint of demographic forces and U.S. foreign policy. The perspective is that of a Washington foreign policy insider, a former ambassador to Haiti (1981-83) and official with the United States Agency for International Development (1986-88). Preeg defines the dilemma of the book's title in terms of the inadequacy of U.S. policy, which prioritizes short-term objectives over long-term efforts to confront the unrelenting demographic forces that underlie the Haitian crisis.

The demographic model that frames this book has three defining elements: rural population pressure on arable land – the “Malthusian prophecy run wild” (p. 27), rural/urban migration, and outward migration. Haiti's problems cannot simply be attributed to its demography; however, its demographic forces are without a doubt extremely important. If anything Preeg underestimates the sheer scale of current rural/urban migration in Haiti and the singular importance of Port-au-Prince as Haiti's primary urban destination. Oddly enough, there is little discussion of the quality of demographic data – projections of census data collected a generation ago (1982). Projections of the late 1990s, taking into account urban sprawl, suggest that urban areas may now be 41 percent of the population, of which 80 percent is concentrated in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, mostly in teeming slums. The massive peasant base that has traditionally defined Haiti may be less than 59 percent of the population rather than the two-thirds or 70 percent commonly attributed to the rural sector (Smucker 1999).

The most striking element of this study is the discussion of U.S. interest. In the post-Cold War era, the most immediate vested interest of the United States in Haiti is “protection of U.S. borders” (p. 96). Specifically, geographic proximity and the threat of a large outflow of people are the driving forces of U.S. Haiti policy, including military intervention in 1994

(p. 65). U.S. policy is also affected by a domestic population of Haitian-Americans estimated at one million and Haiti's role as a transshipment point for drugs (p. 82). According to Preeg, other factors influencing U.S. policy include humanitarian and human rights considerations, nation-building, free trade (pp. 87-89), and eventual incorporation of the Caribbean into the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA). In assessing Haiti's future prospects, Preeg views human resources and geography as the country's key assets in the emerging "new Caribbean economic order" – labor intensive industry, nontraditional agriculture, tourism, and other services based on proximity to the U.S. market and NAFTA (p. 70). Overall, these assets and economic sectors sound very much like the old Caribbean economic order – revisited.

From a cultural perspective, the discussion of "national character" is inadequate, based primarily on political studies by outsiders. Despite pertinent references to Haitian novels, the study has inaccuracies in the interpretation of creolisms and Haitian social arrangements. It is not fair to say "voodoo defies explanation as religious experience" (p. 23) or that traditional culture is necessarily resistant to change (p. 24). Preeg's positive assessment of the business class significantly underestimates its internal contradictions and the powerful influence of old tendencies toward monopoly and protectionism (p. 25). Duvalier further centralized political power but the U.S. Occupation (1915-34) had long set the stage for unprecedented domination by Port-au-Prince (p. 52). Despite the longstanding interest in Haiti shown by members of the congressional Black Caucus, some would take issue with the notion that Haitian-American ties with African-Americans are deeper than ties among Hispanic-Americans of contrasting national origins (p. 65).

This study has some of the best material in print on Haitian out-migration, and the U.S. interdiction policy negotiated by the author in 1981. Preeg describes U.S. immigration policy and its contradictions during the era of de facto government (1991-94), economic embargo, and the return of Aristide in 1994. An informative appendix by Christopher Chivvis discusses U.S. immigration law and its application to Haiti.

It would have been useful if the author had situated Haitian migration in the broader regional context. Large-scale population movements and forced migration have long been defining elements of Haiti and the Caribbean. Out-migration has been a common escape valve in this century, a solution to poverty in dependent island economies of the Caribbean.

Rotberg's edited volume is a collection of papers drawn from an interdisciplinary conference on Haiti held in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, in September 1995. The conference, whose theme was Prospects for Political and Economic Reconstruction in Haiti, brought together an unusual mix of

sponsors and contributors from academia and government including the World Peace Foundation, the U.S. Army War College, the Haitian Studies Association, and the University of Puerto Rico. The volume emphasizes contributions by political scientists, but also includes anthropologists, economists, a geographer, a lawyer, and an educator. The papers stress political analysis and policy options for economic development, education, and the administration of justice. Rotberg proposes the volume as an agenda of critical issues for Haitian reconstruction (p. xi).

It is perhaps not surprising that political issues predominate in this collection of papers. The conference took place about one year after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was returned to power by U.S. military forces – after having been ousted by the Haitian army in 1991, and just prior to new presidential elections in 1995. These dramatic events reflect Haiti's still unresolved political crisis precipitated by the fall of Duvalier in 1986.

Contributions include the preface by Robert Rotberg, a conference report by Jennifer L. McCoy, and papers by Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Mats Lundahl, Donald E. Schulz, Robert Pastor, Robert Fatton, Jr., Robert E. Maguire, Michel S. Laguerre, Clive Gray, Anthony V. Catanese, William G. O'Neill, and Marc E. Prou. Themes include dismantling the predatory state, "reconstructing" Haiti, national identity, economic growth, poverty alleviation, redefining the state, justice and security, and the creation of a democratic political culture.

Political prospects constitute a key underlying theme in virtually all papers in this volume. The political analysis tends to be framed along the lines of political culture or class-based analysis. Trouillot's contribution emphasizes the importance of a new social contract as the basis for genuine change, arguing that Haiti's political problems are firmly rooted in social and economic inequality rather than the political sector per se. Like Trouillot, Bellegarde-Smith notes the historic exclusion of the rural masses from the political process, and the role of peasant lifeways as a longstanding counter-culture of resistance to the predatory state and urban hegemony. Looking to the future, he proposes Haitian religion (*vodun*) and language (*kreyol*) as defining cultural elements for a shared national identity that cuts across class, rooted in a rich vein of Haitian tradition that is local, democratic, and largely rural.

As a possible case in point, Maguire (p. 154) takes note of local grassroots peasant organizations as a training ground for new leadership, and the electoral success of peasant leaders in rural and municipal government and parliament in 1995. Laguerre emphasizes the growing role of the Haitian diaspora in domestic Haitian politics and civil society. He views the diaspora, especially Haitian-Americans, as a "guarantor" of democratic transition and a major factor in opening up a closed political system (pp. 177-80). Laguerre

stresses the influence of the diaspora in Haiti, but makes no mention of the ambivalence commonly expressed by Haitians toward the *djas* (diaspora).

Pastor links Haiti's democratic prospects to maintaining civilian control over national security forces (p. 124). He takes note of the "artificial quality" (p. 134) of Haitian transition to democracy due to the ongoing presence of international forces, yet emphasizes the need for a long term U.N. presence. Pastor also observes that Washington has a very narrow definition of success for a Haiti policy governed primarily by domestic U.S. politics (p. 114). Fatton notes that repressive organs of the old predatory state still remain. American military intervention in the 1990s demonstrates once again that violence is the "decisive element" in Haitian politics (p. 136). He argues that prospects for democratization are defined by the underlying balance of class power rather than an "inherent Haitian cultural norm" (p. 137).

Contributors to this volume generally recognize the "economic substructure of violence" (Schulz, p. 100) and the importance of alleviating poverty as a key to democratizing Haiti's national political culture. O'Neill stresses the importance of creating a functioning, independent judiciary (p. 199). Prou views the education system as "moribund" and "beyond renewal" as it presently stands (p. 218). A number of papers raise the question of whether democracy is possible in a context of low economic development combined with high illiteracy (Pastor, p. 133).

Lundahl concludes that peasant agriculture is doomed, and the national economy is at its lowest ebb in history. In keeping with Preeg's formulation noted earlier, Lundahl, Gray, and others commonly look to privatization and the light assembly industry as economic alternatives. In contrast, Catanese proposes investment in the rural economy and the poor majority. In the discussion of alternatives, there is virtually no mention of investment in secondary cities as an alternative to Port-au-Prince and its present status as a dysfunctional, mega-city. Lundahl errs in suggesting that government as a dominant constraint has been removed (p. 87). In any case, the democratization of the Haitian state remains "a fragile project in the making" (Fatton, p. 149).

These volumes on Haiti reflect at least in part the local consequences of globalization in the world economy – dependency and foreign intervention, the diaspora as a transnational citizenry, free trade policies, and the decline of peasant agriculture in a society strongly marked by its massive peasant base. Haiti's predatory state is itself rooted in sharply stratified divisions of society dating from the colonial era and the globalizing forces of the past five centuries.

In reading these volumes, there is an odd dissonance in frequent references to Haitian political culture. The anthropologically oriented contributors talk more of class than culture – cultural politics rather than political culture. Political culture is undoubtedly a useful analytical stance but many

contributors exhibit a limited sense of the underlying cultural context. In discussing political culture, it would have been useful to draw more heavily on distinctions between archaic and modern states.

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The Repositioning of US-Caribbean Relations in the New World Order. RANSFORD W. PALMER (ed.). Westport CT: Praeger, 1997. vii + 222 pp. (Cloth US\$ 59.95)

U.S.-Caribbean Relations: Their Impact on Peoples and Culture. RANSFORD W. PALMER (ed.). Westport CT: Praeger, 1998. vii + 167 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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It is hard to think of an issue more central to the future of the Caribbean, economically, politically, and sociologically, than its relationship with the United States. Yet the academic debate about U.S.-Caribbean relations is presently neither extensive nor nuanced. This makes the two books devoted to this question and edited by Randy Palmer all the more welcome. Both derive from the same conference held at the Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center at Howard University in April 1996. The focus of the first volume, published in 1997, is politics, economics, and international relations, more or less traditionally conceived; the focus of the second, published in 1998, is more cultural and sociological in tone. Unfortunately, neither book constitutes the comprehensive yet penetrating analysis of the current dynamics of the U.S.-Caribbean relationship which is so needed. Although each book has its merits, each also has weak chapters, and it is hard not to feel that the attempt to generate two volumes from the one conference was a mistake.

The 1997 volume explicitly divides its discussion into the political and economic aspects of U.S.-Caribbean relations. In the former section there are three contributions. Cedric Grant offers a competent account of the recent history of these relations, starting with the emergence of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), going on to the threat that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) posed to CBI preferences and the difficulties into which all attempts to legislate some form of "NAFTA parity" for the CBI countries have run, and concluding with a discussion of the new Association for Caribbean States (ACS) as a potential institutional base from which Caribbean Basin states can more effectively negotiate with the United States on trade and other matters. Grant clearly still hopes that the ACS can develop the capacity to play a constructive role in regional affairs, but he is realistic enough to appreciate that "US reaction to the organization completely discounts the ACS as a mechanism for facilitating the development of relations between the Caribbean and itself" (p. 44). He is referring here to U.S. statements that, with Cuba as a member, the ACS is thereby ruled out as a valid interlocutor. U.S.-Cuban relations thus remain a special case within U.S.-Caribbean relations nearly a decade after the end of the Cold War. In the next chapter Michael Erisman shows that U.S. policy continues to be driven by "the desire to put Castro's government and the Revolution in a position where they would be so weakened, so discredited, or so dispirited that they might disintegrate" (p.53). In what is, in my view, the best chapter of the book – well informed, astute, politically sophisticated – he charts the "moving goal posts" by which over the past several years new demands and preconditions for normalization have been set by the United States, often for reasons of domestic electoral expediency, whenever previous demands have been satisfied. Alex Dupuy then completes this section of the book with an account of the U.S. military intervention in Haiti in 1994. Although he points out that it could be said that the United States itself "created" the Haitian army, he concedes that a situation was eventually reached whereby the United States could no longer control it except by destroying it. In that sense, he judges that the intervention does show that "right-wing or would-be right-wing (military) dictators in this hemisphere can no longer count on unwavering US support" (p. 86).

By comparison, the analyses of the economic aspects of the current U.S.-Caribbean relationship are less thorough. The one exception to that remark is constituted by Gregory Schoepfle's chapter on trade relations over the last decade. This contains a huge amount of useful, detailed material on CBI, the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), the Andean Trade Preference Act, and NAFTA. It does not offer an exciting read, but it will be referred to. Beyond this, Kathleen Dorsainvil presents a few brief and limited observations on trade relations between the United States and Haiti, Wilfred David makes some familiar criticisms of structural adjust-

ment programs and calls idealistically for something called "authentic development," George Dalley talks about post-NAFTA U.S. trade policy from the perspective of a lobbyist seeking to influence that policy on behalf of Caribbean governments, and John Harrington and Peter Johnson, representing Caribbean/Latin American Action, an influential pro-business interest group based in Washington, argue that the Caribbean should focus determinedly on the process of building a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), as promised by President Clinton at the Miami "Summit of the Americas" held in December 1994. This last contribution is very short, but it does demonstrate a hard-edged realism about the political and economic prospects facing the region that is sadly lacking in some of the other contributions. Harrington and Johnson conclude that

"the Caribbean must maximize its internal economic strength ... should strengthen, not weaken its association with the US ... [make] better use of the natural strengths of the Caribbean diaspora ... [to] ... strengthen US policy toward the Caribbean ... [and finally] ... must aggressively engage the FTAA process as a subregional group." (p.180)

Or, as they put it even more pithily, "there is indeed a repositioning underway for US-Caribbean relations [but] it has absolutely nothing to do with the ACS" (p.180).

The 1998 volume, as indicated by its title, seeks to address the impact of U.S.-Caribbean relations on the lives of the peoples of the Caribbean. This is unquestionably an important dimension of the relationship, not least because, as Palmer himself notes in his introduction to the preceding volume, the repositioning of the relationship "will not depend on trade alone; it will also depend on the culture and identity of the traders" (p. 7). The chapters in this collection range accordingly over such issues as economic development, tourism, migration, culture, and religion. There are some interesting discussions, notably Joyce Toney's account of the politics of the West Indian Carnival in New York, but generally the tone is bland, the material familiar, and the style that of papers published largely as they must have been delivered to the conference.

This is a real pity, because the emphasis implicit in the approach of this volume – namely, that economic, social, and cultural interaction between the United States and the Caribbean has reached such a significant level that it has changed the nature of the relationship – is the key insight missing from the first book. Here the intellectual parameters of the authors, whether they be political scientists or economists, are still predominantly grounded in a state-to-state or national economy-to-national economy view of international relations. This may, however, already be somewhat dated in the

U.S.-Caribbean context where the process of entanglement between what one might call the U.S. state-society complex and the many Caribbean state-society complexes has now given a *transnational*, as opposed to an *international*, character to contemporary relations. In my own recent research I have sought to explore this by reference to the notion of an emergent "Caribbean America," defined essentially as the structural context that now links the political economies of the United States and the Caribbean, albeit in a fashion that is far from being symmetrical or mutually beneficial. This broad claim can be fairly easily sustained by reference to recent patterns of trade, financial flows, migration, and narcotics movements, although more work manifestly needs to be done to develop and test all the implications of the hypothesis. Nevertheless, it may provide an appropriate means with which to begin to probe the many subtle and complex interactions that constitute contemporary "U.S.-Caribbean relations." It is certainly an argument that is no more than hinted at in these two edited volumes.

After the Hurricane: Linking Recovery to Sustainable Development in the Caribbean. PHILIP R. BERKE & TIMOTHY BEATLEY. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. xiv + 212 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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After the Hurricane focuses on some long avoided issues in the management of emergency assistance resources. The use of the resources to initiate mitigation interventions, access to these resources by the poor, and the role of external aid organizations in decision-making about the use of such aid are scrutinized by the authors with the intention of defining some principles of organization, decision-making, and resource management that can promote the introduction and sustainability of recovery interventions. The book moves in a logical evolution from general concepts and principles of disaster management, through modeling of sustainability and recovery to case studies, lessons learned, and the way forward.

Chapter 1 presents the global context of disaster impacts and economic dislocation and makes the link to sustainable development issues. While noting that sustainable development has come to focus attention on the role of resource consumption and environmental protection in economic devel-

opment, Berke and Beatley offer a lucid demonstration of how sustainable development issues can be linked to recovery policy making and planning.

Chapter 2 builds on the conceptual infrastructure of sustainable development established in Chapter 1 to articulate a general model of post-disaster recovery. In fact it is this analytical platform that exposes the current myths about post-disaster coordination and capacity of local organizations. In particular, the observations that external agencies focus primarily on compliance with rigid administrative controls and that they generally view impacted governments as being too weak to be accountable and to lead, are at the heart of difficulties in making the link in emergency assistance between recovery and sustainability development.

Chapter 3 is an excellent exposé of the prevailing operational environment that militates against the basics of sustainable development and highlights the need for a change in the philosophy and practice of disaster assistance, particularly to developing countries. It especially makes the case for a review of disaster delivery, recovery, and development aid systems that are so distorted by outsiders who justify and perpetuate their own projects at the expense of the suffering people.

Chapters 4-6 examine a number of response recovery and development issues in four Caribbean islands affected by Hurricanes Gilbert (1988) and Hugo (1989). The analytical framework and the operational model developed earlier are used to examine the recovery experiences in Jamaica, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts-Nevis, and Montserrat. The cases in general suggest that where the principles of sustainable development are used in disaster recovery there is a more participatory and empowering outcome. Berke and Beatley understandably do not address the question of which, if any, of the principles were essential for an effective link between recovery interventions and sustainability, but they do highlight a number of issues that are critical to a redirected path for disaster planning in the Caribbean.

Chapter 7 identifies top-down strategies, inadequate disaster plans, the piecemeal approach to recovery, and weak development control mechanisms as areas in need of immediate attention in disaster planning practice in the region. The vision offered for future directions in Caribbean Disaster Planning, centered around sustainable development, as a framework for integrating hazard reduction with other social and environmental goals. This vision is increasingly being shared by disaster management stakeholders in the region.

It is worth noting that the field data were generated in 1990. Since then two of the case study centers – Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts-Nevis have been affected at least twice more by hurricanes. The authors missed an opportunity to validate their initial findings or modify their analytical models based on real experiences.

Although the book has been thoroughly researched, readers need to be cautious about the extent to which statements made by individuals are presented as generally reflective of actual conditions on the ground. There are several instances of this in the book. *After the Hurricane* should, nevertheless, be recommended reading for personnel in aid organizations and sustainable development programs, as well as for policy managers, disaster management officials, and anyone in environmental and disaster management studies.

Class Alliances and the Liberal Authoritarian State: The Roots of Post-Colonial Democracy in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Surinam. F.S.J. LEDGISTER. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1998. viii + 216 pp. (Paper US\$ 21.95)

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It has been repeatedly reported that the process of democratization that accompanied the winding-up of the colonial empires after World War II has been most continuous and successful in countries that were part of the former British empire. This observation has prompted scholars like Weiner and Huntington to assume that British political culture, based on the rule of law, a system of representation and election, and norms of competitive politics, has been decisive in maintaining liberal democracy in these countries, a great number of them being part of the Caribbean.

The survival of liberal democracy in the Dutch Caribbean, particularly in Suriname, is often attributed to its consociational character. Following Lijphart, adherents of this theory believe that stability and democracy in a plural society are achieved best by a system of proportional representation, cooperation of segmental elites, and a coalition of political parties each representing a social segment and possessing a mutual veto and a high degree of segmental autonomy. Dew has been most influential applying this pacification model to Suriname.

Ledgister holds the opinion that the continuity of liberal democracy is not a consequence of the political culture introduced by the former colonial power. He thinks that this is due to the way the colonized took over the colonial state. Crucial in the Caribbean, he believes, has been the embed-

ding of two-way class alliance politics in the liberal authoritarian state from the 1930s. In his view this two-way alliance between the working class and the middle class – lower-class party supporters acting as a check on middle-class party leaders and middle-class elites legitimizing themselves on the basis of working-class support – has sustained democracy in the region.

In order to prove his theory and to refute the Weiner/Huntington and consociational theses (the “conventional wisdom” as he labels them) Ledgister compares the political history of two former British colonies and one former Dutch colony in the Caribbean: Jamaica (a “Creole society”) and Trinidad (a plural society) upholding the majoritarian Westminster model of democracy, and Suriname (a plural society) enjoying a consociational form of democracy. Ledgister argues that the three countries followed similar patterns of decolonization, but notes that in Suriname there was a disconnection between the worker protests of the 1930s and the emergence of party politics in response to the grant of universal suffrage. As a result, class alliances in Suriname were one-way rather than two-way alliances, which induced the regression of democracy after 1975. In Jamaica and Trinidad, the presence of two-way class alliances safeguarded the survival of democracy.

Ledgister’s line of argument seems most valid in the case of Jamaica. Here, the labor revolt of 1938 inspired Alexander Bustamante to form the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU) and Norman Manley to establish the People’s National Party (PNP), which was affiliated to the Trade Union Council. In anticipation of the first elections on the basis of universal suffrage in 1944, Bustamante in 1943 used his BITU to found the Jamaican Labour Party (JLP). Since 1944, the PNP and the JLP, both as alliances of the lower and middle classes, have been Jamaica’s chief contestors for state power and have controlled the country’s dynamic two-party system.

In Trinidad, the “dominant party system” has primarily been the domain of the Peoples’ National Movement (PNM) led by Eric Williams. However, the PNM was formed in 1956 and not in the wake of the labor unrest in 1937 and the introduction of universal suffrage in 1945. These gave rise to a number of political parties, but according to Ledgister these were merely campaign machines at the disposal of political entrepreneurs and did not give way to a party system. Ledgister calls the PNM the first mass political party in Trinidad, bringing together middle-class leadership and lower-class support. Adopting a statement made by Williams himself, Ledgister considers the PNM as the heir to the labor movement of the 1930s and the social democracy of the 1940s. In this (rather contrived) way he fits the PNM into his model.

Ledgister rightly points out the discontinuity between the labor revolt of the 1930s and the political awakening of the 1940s in Suriname. Labor leaders like Anton de Kom and Louis Doedel managed to inspire the work-

ing class, but their actions were suppressed by the colonial authorities thereby preventing the establishment of any mass organization that might demand social and political reforms. After World War II, political parties created mass bases allying labor and middle-class activists. These alliances, Ledgister argues, were one-way: middle-class politicians mobilized the masses assuming that the middle class within each segment was the "proper leader" of an ethnic solidarity. Unlike Jamaica and Trinidad, Ledgister concludes, Suriname had a liberal democracy that did not rest on a foundation of social democracy. It should be added, however, that in the early 1950s, the NPS and the PSV had established close ties with the two major Suriname labor unions whose rank and file had a profound effect on the policy of these parties. From those years onwards, democracy in Suriname did represent the interests of all classes.

In his lengthy essay Ledgister pays attention to a factor in democratization processes which no doubt deserves serious consideration. He properly observes that class alliances have played an important role in Caribbean politics and takes up the challenge to analyze these roles from a comparative point of view. Yet, the fact that Jamaican and Trinidadian democracies on the one hand and Suriname democracy on the other have different origins, does not necessarily mean that these origins determine their sustainability and duration. In fact, the validity of this determinism is questionable. In Guyana and Grenada, for instance, labor unions formed a catalyst for political parties as well, but two-way class alliances did not prevent the dissolution of democracy in the 1970s and 1980s.

Assuming a mono-causal relationship between the presence of two-class alliances and the survival of democracy, Ledgister focuses on the initial political structure. He neglects the development of Caribbean democracies over the years and the stance and actions of politicians who were involved in this process. It is common knowledge that studying political leadership is also crucial in understanding liberal-authoritarian states. To give an example: explaining the decline of democracy in Suriname, one cannot ignore the fact that Henck Arron – in marked contrast with his predecessor Johan Adolf Pengel – in 1973 executed a "coup" trading a multi-ethnic for a mono-ethnic government, thus breaking with the principles of consociational democracy. Unfortunately, the author invariably tends to exclude aspects such as these from his class-alliances thesis.

Ledgister's book is interesting since it tries to work out an alternative for the Eurocentric Weiner/Huntington and consociational theses. The author provides some thought-provoking comments and observations, particularly on the genesis of Caribbean democracy. His theory, however, is built on a small empirical basis and lacks the power and conviction to serve as a substitute for the theses it opposes.